

# BLACK NOMAD

Dhimashada caqliga {Mental Death}

*Fig. 2*



Mahad.M.Hori

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By: Mahad.M.Hori

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*“As knowledge attains to distinctness  
and as consciousness intensifies,  
there is a proportionate increase in pain”  
Arthur Schopenhauer*



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# Dedication

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*This book is dedicated to . . .*

*Osman Hersi  
Abdirahman Hashi  
Abdinasire dirie  
& my little sister Deqa*

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## 0.0: EXORDIUM

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In this text, I will rationalize the utterly un-linear trajectory of my life. I will accomplish this task by sharing my personal experiences and discoveries in, and about, the city of Toronto. In an effort to contextualize my narrative, I'll focus on a few fractions of the limitless existential situations that capture the curse of being black in an anti-black world; and then, I'll examine the concepts of anti-black racism, the 'condemned-creeds', and structural violence.

The trajectory of my narrative will lead us to dwell upon our public educational system. In assessing its role, within the global project of anti-black racism, it shall become evident that our school system has an unparalleled authority over black children; for it has the unbridled power to either destroy or develop their minds. We, then, will arrive at the realization that the role of our school system within the global project of anti-black racism, is determined by this particular power; for it uses its sacred status as an educational institution, to simultaneously mask its destructive capabilities, and destroy the minds of defenseless black children.

With these insights, we shall summon and examine some of the incidents and rationalizations that capture the war that was (and still is) waged, against the black students in our anti-black public schools. As a result of our examinations, we will acknowledge that our public school system commits structural violence against its black students; and afterwards, we'll identify our educational system's specific mediums of structural violence.

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Towards the end, we'll briefly examine the 'paradox of rebellion' and the 'paradox of the condemned-creeds'; and as a result, we'll confront the complex circumstances that bind action to inaction, rebellion to subjugation, resistance to conformity, subservience to self-determination, and choice to captivity.

By examining these paradoxes, we'll magnify the confounding conundrums that cripple our efforts to destroy the practices of structural violence and anti-black racism. Here, it will become evident that in order to effectively disrupt, destabilize, and abolish structural violence, we must first dismantle the paradoxes.

In the penultimate chapters, we will discuss the methods via which school employees are intimidated, enticed, and seduced to comply with the structural violence, that they witness in their schools. And afterwards, we'll consider the role of gender as it relates to school-based structural violence; and we'll discuss why systems of violence, such as anti-black racism and structural violence, are currently necessary and beneficial for our Canadian society at large.

## 0.5: Meel laga bilaabo {Starting point}

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*“What would you expect to find  
when the muzzle that has silenced  
the voices of black men, is removed?  
That they would thunder your praise?  
When these heads that our fathers  
have forced to the very ground are risen,  
do you expect to read adoration in their eyes?”  
Jean Paul Sartre - Black Orpheus (book)*

*“Against the raceless credo . . . racism cannot be rejected  
without a dialectic in which humanity experiences a blackened world”  
Lewis Ricardo Gordon - Her Majesty's Other Children (book)*

*“It rises . . . it rises from the depths of the earth . . .  
the black flood rises . . . waves of howling . . .  
and still more are pouring in”  
Aimé Césaire - Lyric and Dramatic poetry (book)*

A particular populace in the city of Toronto has been systematically oppressed and violated by a multitude of public & private institutions; this populace, which I am a member of, is the black populace of Toronto. As a prelude to this Treatise, I shall expound on the existential situation of this populace; and as a result, some facts about us sentient beings who populate Toronto's poisonous peripheries will be announced.

We, black Torontonians, have suffered in silence for decades. Geographically isolated on the margins of our city, misrepresented in the media, and excluded

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from the benefits of our social institutions, we have been dying a slow death. Our children, also, have been targeted for termination; for Toronto's militarized public schools have devoted their efforts towards damaging and disciplining, rather than educating, them.

As a result of post-industrialization, a school to prison pipeline that streams our children from our tax-funded public schools, and towards our ever-expanding prisons, has been designed for our demise and destruction. Thus, our innocent children are initially targeted and traumatized inside our public schools, and then they are abandoned to rot in dismal and dreary prison cells.

While some of us overcame the deadly schools that were determined to destroy us, and the detrimental ramifications of a permanent traumatisation, many more of us have been coerced and seduced to depend on a social welfare system that has effectively reduced, ruined, and paralyzed our collective will. As a result, the youthful vigor of most of our children has decayed and transformed itself into the everlasting thorn of unrealized potential.

With such trying tribulations, and in an effort to defend ourselves and seek justice, we've endeavored to utilize the political system. To our dismay, we discovered that our inquiries as tax-paying citizens were ignored; and our votes as members of Toronto's polis<sup>1</sup> were neither wanted nor desirable. The adage "Out of sight and out of mind" describes the steadfast attitude

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<sup>1</sup>"The polis (plural, poleis) was the ancient Greek city-state. The word politics comes from this Greek word. In the ancient world, the polis was a nucleus, the central urban area that could also have controlled the surrounding countryside" (Source)

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of our evasive political representatives; sophists<sup>2</sup> who habitually ignore our demands.

Thence, unable to bring our grievances to the center of our city's consciousness and forced to bear our burden in isolation, we've been delivered into a state of despair; and inside the deepest darkest corners of our despair, we realized that we've been poisoned with Toronto's anti-black racist rituals, and that our potential was being denied its inherent right to development.

Exiled from the world of opportunities and communal progress, drowning in the ashes of our dead and dying brothers and sisters, tethered by pain, and unable to evade our disconcerting reality, it became evident that to be black in a city where anti-black racism is a norm, is to experience hell on earth.

Thence, it is through these declarations that I announce that this treatise is for black people.

Yes... it is to you (black being) that I write.

I sing here a spell to reincarnate the spirits of black ghosts; the Willasha (Niggaz) and Gabdhaha (homegirls) who lived (and still live) futureless lives in the city of Toronto; the dhallinyarada (teenagers) who dug their graves in a city that killed them slowly while burying them alive.

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<sup>2</sup>In ancient Greece, sophists were intellectual charlatans who used fallacious reasoning to acquire status and wealth. More exactly, the Sophist is a person who "uses the power of persuasive speech to construct or create images of the world and is thus a kind of 'enchanter' and imitator". Our politicians embody "the mercenary character of the sophists and their overestimation of the power of speech ([Source](#))

The theorizations therein,  
are directed at you black being;  
for only you will bring,  
the rage that will rescue us;  
and only you can nurture,  
the hatred for injustice,  
that heals holistically.

I hope that you find,  
through the words of my spirit,  
a lighthouse.  
A moment of darkness to revive your will.  
So that you may live,  
not for yourself,  
but for your Kin,  
and for those who are yet to come.

## 1.0: Khatarta aan laarki-karin {Invisible dangers}

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*“The passage through the blood-stained gate is an inaugural moment . . . it is a primal scene. . . that . . . demonstrates that to be a [black] is to be under the brutal power and authority of another”*

*Saidiya Hartman - scenes of subjection (book)*

I, the author, came to Canada nearly 15 years ago. I am a Black male of Somali descent. My mother traveled to this country, because many systems of violence such as colonialism and white supremacy destabilized and destroyed our motherland; our glorious Somalia. For my mother, the death and despair that drowned our nation was contrasted with the Canadian promise. Thus, as captives of colonialism and as disenfranchised nomads, the socio-economic and political domination of white western colonial societies, forced us to flee from the fire that devoured our countries castles, and to seek solace in the caves of our captors.

After our transatlantic voyage to Canada, we decided to settle in the City of Toronto. We moved into a neighborhood that was predominantly populated with Somali and Caribbean families. Like all new-settlers, I was initially shocked by the novelty of my new life. The unfamiliarity of my milieu, however, didn't obstruct me from adjusting to my daily activities. In-fact, I recall that I had a smooth transition into my new Canadian life, and this smooth transition was a product of two simple facts; firstly, when I arrived in Toronto I

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spoke English fluently and therefore language wasn't a barrier; and secondly, my young age and supple mind facilitated an almost immediate adaptation.

All the expectations that I had regarding my new life in Canada, were based on the American movies and television shows that I used to watch. As a kid, I remember watching shows such as 'The Fresh Prince of Bel-air'. I was always fascinated by will smith, who was the main character in that show; he was extremely funny and everyone liked him. I recall that when I first arrived in Toronto, I tried to become will smith; I tried to walk, talk, and laugh like him.

During my first year in Toronto, the idea of being cool, or rather becoming cool, was always in my head. I wanted to fit in and be liked. I was a short and fat, and thus according to middle-school standards I didn't have any physical advantages. However, I did have a good sense of humor. I utilized this quality to my advantage and I successfully made some friends. When I wasn't soliciting friendships, I focused on school; and in my leisure time I read Archie's comic books.

Throughout the summer, I started playing basketball because the neighborhood that I lived in had a basketball court. I gradually became an addict; a basketball-addict. I made a lot of new friends on the court, and like all the young black boys in my area, I aspired to become as skilled as Michael Jordan. So I played, day and night, and I practiced to my heart's content.

By the end of the summer, I developed tight friendships with some the kids who lived in my neighborhood. Most of these kids attended the same middle school that I attended; and therefore, in grade



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8, I was no longer the lonely new-comer, and instead I was now the popular kid from the neighborhood. To my surprise, I suddenly discovered that I was one of the cool kids; everyone respected me, people were nice to me, and I was always included in everything.

Later on in life, I would learn the hard lesson that the withdrawn and disinterested character of coolness that my young black friends displayed, and that I naively emulated in an enthusiastic manner, was a subconscious defense mechanism; a defense mechanism that protected them from a judgmental white gaze. A gaze that was personified in the school teachers who discouraged them from learning by dismissing their questions and extinguishing their natural curiosity.

Towards the middle of the year, my grades in school began to rapidly descend. I became disinterested with my education, and my disengagement distressed my family. My mother was an educated woman who knew the value of a good education, and since my situation was dire, she decided to take matters into her own hands. She hired a tutor, and with some extra help I was able to graduate from middle school with decent marks.

Also, it's noteworthy to mention that it was during grade 8 that I started to adhere to the 'condemned-creeds' (which will be shortly discussed); and if I am to be earnest, I believe that during that year and the following years, most of my energy was invested in the exhausting task of simultaneously learning to become black, and acquiring the skills to navigate through, and survive in, an anti-black city.

### 1.1: Xaafadda aan ku koray (The neighborhood that raised me)

The teachers who taught me how to become black and survive in anti-black world, and who taught through action, mostly lived in my Xaafadd (neighborhood). So, at this juncture, we shall acquaint ourselves with the Xaafadd (neighborhood) that I lived in.

The Xaafadd that I called 'home' had a unique character. There were four primary elements that defined the character of our Xaafadd.<sup>3</sup> Firstly there was a particular version of hip-hop and rap that dominated our Xaafadd (a version that glamorized clothes, gangs, drugs, and violence).

Secondly, the low-socioeconomic status of the Xaafadd (which was reflected in the fact that most of the neighborhood parents did not receive a formal western education, and that many of them were on social assistance) was a disconcerting reality. Thirdly, we were acquainted with the violent nature of gang-culture. This culture dominated our Xaafadd, and thus

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<sup>3</sup> During my first years in Toronto, the neighbourhood factors were new to me and therefore I had to adjust to them. These factors, however, were not novel to my peers because most of them were born in our anti-black city. After I adjusted to them, the four neighbourhood factors became too normal and too insignificant to be deemed worthy of articulation. I wasn't oblivious to them; instead, I was indifferent to them. I didn't care about them and I didn't pay any attention to them because these factors were part of my milieu, in the same way that the grass on the ground in my neighbourhood was a part of my milieu. As a result, the significance of these neighbourhood factors only became evident to me after I left the xafaad.

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everyone in our area was constantly harassed by lurking police officers. The gang culture that pervaded my Xaafadd was dangerously infectious; even family members seduced each other into enlisting. Also, many good black kids who were exiled from our local public schools, and who were unable to secure employment in our impoverished milieu, gladly embraced the loving protection of our resident gang. The world rejected them, and therefore they found love in the arms of other rejects.

Fourthly, there was a unique value system that was operational in the Xaafadd; we'll call it the 'condemned-creeds'. This value system was originated by my friend Abdirahman Hashi. To be brief, the 'condemned-creeds' is a value system (or a world view) that's maintained through a dual system of positive activities and negative activities. According to this value system, everyone should aspire to perform the positive activities, and no one should ever perform the negative activities. I've recorded some of the activities below.

**This table provides the structure of the condemned-creeds**

<b>POSITIVE ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>NEGATIVE ACTIVITIES</b>
Being disrespectful towards authority	Showing respect to authority
Being cold and emotionless	Being emotional
Breaking the law	Obeying the law
Being valiant during crime commitment	Being docile and submissive
Being hard (tough, rough, manly)	Being soft (kind, considerate, feminine)
Being Fearless during violent confrontations	Showing cowardice during violent confrontations
Being disengaged from formal education	Actively engaging in formal education

The three neighborhood factors that preceded the 'condemned-creeds' described the social environment wherein we (me and my black friends) were socialized. The 'condemned-creeds', however, wasn't just another factor of our social environment; rather, it was the value system that adjusted our conduct towards, and normalized the factors of, our social environment.

As marginalized black youth, the 'condemned-creeds' reconfigured our existential situation by re-defining reality. Our attitudes, activities, and aspirations then adjusted to a reality wherein the 'condemned-creeds' was the invisible norm. In this sense, the 'condemned-creeds' was itself a world view; for it was

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'The lens' through which we saw, evaluated, and acted upon the world.

Like all value systems, the 'condemned-creeds' had an evaluative component. This component assessed individual loyalty to group values. For example: Insofar as I didn't perform the negative activities, and performed the positive activities, I maintained group loyalty; and as a result, I would be encouraged with praises, and rewarded with privileges such as having the first puff of the blunt (weed), or cracking the bottle (alcohol).

On the other hand, by performing the negative activities, one undermined group loyalty; and as a result, one would either get shamed with repercussions or entirely ex-communicated. The repercussions could be as trivial as teasing and as serious as violent shake-downs (robberies); and resisting violent repercussions with violence was the only way to evince loyalty to the 'condemned-creeds'.

Within my Xaafadd, we learned to embody the popularized black persona of the thug by performing the positive activities of the 'condemned-creeds'. Indeed, like a spectacle to be seen, we performed our parts; and in our performances, we were both the audience and the actors. We judged, imitated, rejected, and encouraged each other. Here, a type of informal education was operational; we were (acting and becoming black) embracing the 'condemned-creeds'.

Since many of us were simultaneously, seduced by the glamorized, exciting, and reckless lives of those who adhered to the 'condemned-creeds', and repulsed by the boring and cautious lives of obedient conformists, it

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could be argued that our youthfulness and desire for excitement were solely responsible for our adherence to the 'condemned-creeds'. Still, we shouldn't blindly embrace such a simple justification; for it wasn't mere heedlessness and adventurousness that confirmed our submission to this subversive, and potentially self-destructive, value system.

Rather, the most significant fact that caused our submission was our exclusion from the wider society. This exclusion was a by-product of the practice of anti-black racism, and therefore before I continue my narrative, we must first grasp this practice.

Recognizing that the task of itemizing the countless components of this practice is too exhausting and painstaking, we've limited the scope of our examination to (a) an historical highlight of anti-black racism, (b) an analysis of the anti-black persona, (c) an account anti-black beauty, and (d) a glimpse into anti-black morality. By dissecting these four facets of anti-black racism, we shall possess a primitive picture of this pernicious practice.

## 1.2: Cunsuriyada ku wajahan dadka madow (Anti-black racism)

### White History

*“History that hurts- [is] the still-unfolding narrative of captivity, dispossession, and domination that engenders the black subject”  
Saidiya Hartman - scenes of subjection (book)*

*“The black [person], however sincere, is a slave to the past”  
Frantz fanon -Black skins white masks (book)*

From a historical perspective, Europe's global colonial Empire has always required a rationale to morally justify the extermination and exploitation of OUR people. The duality of white supremacy and black degeneracy was therefore originally invented by them as a mere justification for the violent exploitation of OUR people. This justification, in turn, enshrined anti-black racism as the practice that reinforced both the goodness of whiteness, and evilness of blackness.

Moreover, Blood-thirsty and exploitative white societies, in Europe and America, who were (and still are) determined to terminate black people, through violent institutions such as colonization and slavery, have globalized anti-black racism. Thus, for the past few centuries the black person has globally been symbolized as the non-human, primitive, cannibalistic, and inferior 'other'.

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In Canada, to be specific, the prevalent anti-black climate is a remnant of the British colonial regime that endeavored to erase the indigenous peoples of North America, while enslaving the Black peoples of Africa. Anti-black racism, therefore, is a practice that was imported to Canada from Europe. It is a practice that has evolved with time. It has changed its form, and sustained its objective; which is the destruction of black people.

### The Anti-Black persona

*“The place of the black imago in the white unconscious-[is] a place marked by murderous aggression and a phobic transferral of feelings of loss onto the black other.” David Marriott -Haunted Life: Visual Culture and Black Modernity (book)*

The anti-black persona was born in the cradle of colonial violence. In order to fathom the persona of anti-black racists, we shall summon a particular adage that states: “An anti-black racist is a morally righteous saint with a clean conscience who cleanses his/her soul, and reinforces his/her morality, whenever he/she thinks an anti-black racist thought.” If we grasp the essence of this peculiar adage, then we will comprehend the persona of anti-black racists.

With a careful gaze, we can deduce that in this adage an anti-black racist is described as a person who, (a) externalizes everything that's immoral and evil, (b) projects everything that he/she externalized on to black people, (c) believes that he/she embodies morality and goodness, and (d) reinforces his/her racial



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and moral superiority every time he/she condemns black people with his/her racist remarks.

From this adage, we can infer a few facts about the anti-black persona. Realizing that every person has the potential to commit evil acts and good acts, the anti-black persona exorcises its 'potential-for-evil' out of itself by projecting it into the black body. It purifies itself by localizing and solidifying an unexamined evil onto the black body. Hence, the anti-black persona is always in flight from its whole self (i.e, the good with the evil).

This permanent 'mode-of-flight' forces the anti-black persona to be in a constant state of anxiety. Unable to face its whole self, it posits the black person as the cause-of-anxiety; and via anti-black racism, it avoids introspection and evades the paradoxes of morality. Thus, for the anti-black persona, the black person is an escape goat; a hated thing that gives it inner-peace and comfort.

Hence, the anti-black persona can only encounter the black person as a fearful object that's both desired (as a stabilizing antithetical force) and despised (as embodied evil). Thus, while perceiving black people through a prism of delusions, the anti-black persona reduces black people to objects that represent the culmination of all anxieties; and as a result, delusional desires drive this demented and dangerous persona to kill black people; it kills to find inner-peace!!

## White Beauty

*“We need to theorize the meaning of beauty in our lives  
so that we can educate for critical consciousness,  
[we need to start] talking through the issues:  
[issues such as] how we acquire and spend money,  
how we feel about beauty,  
what the place of beauty is in our lives  
when we lack material [and white] privilege”  
Bell hooks - Art on my mind: Visual politics (book)*

Why is white beautiful? Why is black ugly? The answer to these queries is simple. With a penetrating posture, the practice of anti-black racism, having transmitted itself into the realm of aesthetics, has posited black as ugly and white as beautiful. This pernicious practice has (a) negated diversity in beauty, (b) globally naturalized European standards of beauty, and (c) aesthetically demonized black people. Consequently, beauty has been genetically coded as white.

Additionally, within this white-dominated-world, our physiological appearances have always been reconstituted by the superstructure of white supremacy as being either ugly or exotic. While on the other hand, the physical features of white people, which entail sharp noses, thin lips, and straight lifeless hair, have always been posited by the superstructure of white supremacy as being beautiful and elegant.

Hence, predetermined as the black ugly 'other' by an anti-black society, the black person discovers over

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time that black can never become beautiful (in this world). Realizing that appearing beautiful is equal to appearing white, and in order to acquire some semblance of beauty, some black people have tried to conform to the dominant European standards of beauty.

Painstakingly, some of our brothers and sisters straighten their hair with various chemicals and machines. Other members of our black populace bleach their skin to make it whiter. While in other circumstances, cultural folk tales convince parents to squeeze the noses of their new-born children, so that their noses become sharper and more 'European'.

These desperate attempts to find a refuge in whiteness are useless; for our blackness bars us from profiting from the popularized Ideals of Beauty; ideals that are limited to the white body. Thus, unable to escape into white beauty, and unable to imagine black beauty, we find ourselves in a dire situation; a situation that condemns us to aspire to ideals that we can never achieve. And plagued by the white standards of beauty that poison our perceptions, we rarely see ourselves!!

## Anti-Black morality

*“In Europe the black [person] has a function:  
to represent the shameful things,  
base instincts, and the dark side of the soul . . .  
the color black symbolizes evil,  
sin, wretchedness, death, war, and famine.”  
Frantz fanon - black skins white masks (book)*

The logic of anti-black racism, which posits the color white as superior and the color black as inferior, has also infiltrated our moral beliefs. Thus, it has become normal to assert that superior moral values enlighten (whiten) the soul, and inferior moral values darken (blacken) the soul.

In my view, such ludicrous assertions are significant because they mirror the anti-black racism that's embedded in our society; for the colors that we assign to our ethics reflect our societal attitude towards blackness and, by extension, black people.

Moreover, our moral values are perverted to such a degree that we (as black people) have been (and still are) predetermined to symbolize immorality. And this fact engenders, within us, a variety of complexes; and poses for us, too many problems.

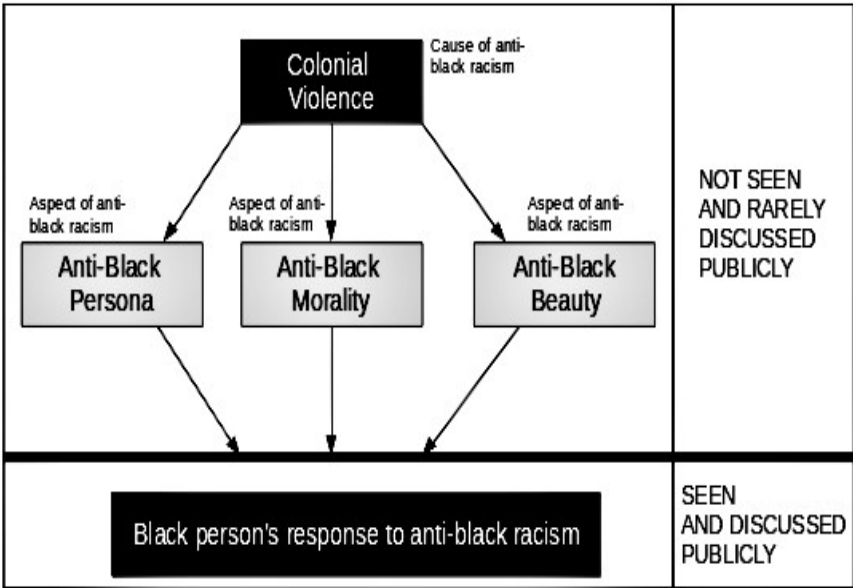
Indeed, the dilemma that faces the black person who conforms to the prevailing anti-black morality is concisely formulated by Lewis. R. Gordon, in his seminal text 'Bad faith and anti-black racism', when he exclaims:

"As I begin to recognize that the Negro is the symbol of sin, I catch myself hating the Negro. But then I recognize that I am a Negro. There are two ways out of this conflict. Either I ask others to pay no attention to my skin, or else I want them to be aware of it. I try, then, to find value for what is bad- since I have unthinkingly conceded that the black is the color of evil. To be bad therefore becomes good. The problem is obvious: in such a situation, whiteness holds all the cards; black positivity becomes derivative and dependent upon white decision. (Gordon, 115)

Anti-black racism, therefore, has produced an anti-black morality that is immoral ! ! So, as we eagerly try to capture a self-determined black positivity; and as we dream about the day when black will be viewed as good; we, in our daily interactions with non-blacks, have to defend ourselves against an anti-black morality which distorts and poisons our very existence!!

**Final remarks on Anti-Black Racism**

In a world wherein the practice of anti-black racism is operative, black people are tethered by (a) anti-black persona's (b) an anti-black morality, and (c) an anti-black beauty; and as we've seen, these three tethers are tied to colonial violence. With these tethers, and many others, black people are forced to exist in a coma state; they are reduced to objects of hatred that symbolize the culmination of anxieties



By hating, torturing, and killing black people, anti-black racists, who are either white or aspire to become white, find inner peace. In other words, they affirm their sanctity and sanity by sacrificing black people in

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ritualistic deaths (shootings, lynching's, structural executions, etc.). Also, since anti-black racists are in a constant 'mode-of-flight' from their whole self (good with the evil), the purging of blacks is necessary for their psychological stability and inner-peace.

Furthermore, this demonic practice of anti-black racism, which is grounded in the popular opposition between the 'good-white-beauty' and the 'evil-black-ugliness', has been dissected by various defenders of justice. One such defender is Frantz fanon who, in his seminal text 'black skin's white masks', dexterously articulated this popular opposition when he exclaimed:

"Darkness, obscurity, shadows, gloom, night, the labyrinth of the underworld, the murky depths, blackening someone's reputation; and on the other side, the bright look of innocence, the white dove of peace, magical heavenly light. A beautiful blond child- how much peace there is in that phrase, how much joy, and above all how much hope! No comparison with a beautiful black child; the adjectives literally don't go together." (Fanon, 166)

His words reinforce the truth that to be black in an anti-black world, wherein the practice of anti-black racism is the norm, is to be condemned and cursed. Thus, with this truth, we shall end our brief overview of the practice of anti-black racism; and hoping that our detour was an informative introduction to this practice, I will now continue my narrative.

### 1.3: Nolosha Xaafadda (Hood Life)

I, at this juncture, concertedly contend that the wicked practice of anti-black racism was (and still is) widespread in our city of Toronto. It was (and still is) like the air we inhale, unworthy of our attention and yet undeniably present. It was (and still is) always in the background of everything. Therefore we blacks were (and still are) always under attack, constantly in defense, and permanently in a state of war.

I recall that we, the black youth of yesteryear, were unable to live for the future, for we were always focused on surviving through an anti-black present. Indeed, we were constantly reconfigured to embody an unexamined evil, and a variety of widespread stereotypes stabilized us as 'symbols of malice'.

For example, one such widespread stereotype was the detrimental notion that a group of black boys, who hanged out together, could be nothing but a gang. This stereotype was fortified by the fact that, while we were in our schools or walking on the streets or inside the malls, figures of authority rapidly rushed to interrogate us; our presence always needed to be justified and our intention was always in question.

Lost in an absurd world that stereotyped us as 'symbols of malice', unable to provide a counter-narrative, and lacking the skills to defend ourselves, we naively embraced the distorted persona that was imposed onto our bodies. We sought harmony with the world, so we became what the world said we were; and when the world told us that we were a problem,



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we answered by embracing gangsterism and causing problems.

To our dismay, we found no solace in our submission to the role of the gangster black man; for we became labeled as the usual suspects for every crime. In fact, we were marked as wicked and treated as criminals. Wherever we went, we were always met with suspicion; and we always symbolized an imminent threat that needed to be managed.

Our tragic and traumatic experiences of being criminalized for being black, is eloquently described by Lewis. R. Gordon in his book 'bad faith and anti-black racism' when he communicates that:

"The black accused needs only to be seen to be guilty of a prior offense. His color is the evidence. He is guilty of blackness. The black child learns what to do WHEN he is approached for shoplifting, WHEN he is approached for assaulting another, WHEN he threatens the welfare of white children, WHEN he is stopped by police. This moment of being stopped by the police, this (it seems) inevitable moment, stands waiting out there like fate. For the black adult, this WHEN is transformed into DON'T. Don't jog, for he might be mistaken for a criminal in flight; DON'T walk through areas that appear affluent, for he might be mistaken for a burglar; DON'T shop with his hands in his pockets, for he might be presumed shoplifting, or, worse, concealing a weapon" (Gordon, "anti-black racism", 102)

Thus, targeted, criminalized, and unable to become good in a city that predetermined us as being evil - we felt confused. Unable to whiten ourselves in a city that equates blackness with criminality- we were ensnared. Indeed, it seemed like the whole world expected us to embrace, and represent, an evil criminal blackness.

Moreover, the fact that we were posited as an inherent impropriety became most blatant when one of us acted in a proper manner. Coming to class early or doing homework or getting good grades would make our teachers overtly ecstatic. Expected to be nothing, when one of us tried to become something, he/she became a spectacle; he/she became the miraculous and glorified exception.

In addition, the incompatibility of blackness and propriety was most evident in the behavior of the overworked teacher, who desperately tried to save the good apple from the rotten bunch. We learned the dominant societal norms, and our expected outcomes, from her actions. Her exaggerated praises towards black exceptions, and her indifferent attitude towards the rest of us, told us that we were not supposed to succeed; and that success was, for people like us, always only a rare mishap. We learned and were constantly reminded that we were destined to become nothing.

We understood that the odds were stacked against us, and we felt and believed that we were perceived as being worthless; but we didn't know why. I, however, now know why; I know now that our experiences: (a) of being discouraged, dismissed, disrespected and

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disciplined in schools, (b) of being harassed by the police, and (c) of being over-represented as criminals, rappers and basketball players in the media, were mere by-products of the practice of anti-black racism in Toronto.

Targeted for termination via the practice of anti-black racism, the alienation that we experienced was excruciating. Still, with all of this in mind, the urgent desire to belong somewhere still needed to be satisfied. What, then, were we supposed to do? Our anti-black city didn't want us; but we wanted to be wanted. Many of our peers already conformed to the 'condemned-creeds', and we didn't want to be separated from them, for we felt safe with each other.

Feeling pressured, afraid, vulnerable, and overwhelmed with anguish, we were captives of a soul-crushing confusion. Amidst our confusion, a silent ultimatum threatened us to embrace the 'condemned-creeds'; and this ultimatum was: belong to the condemned realm or belong nowhere. Thus, unable to bear an unbearable burden, and in an uncertain moment, we made the uninformed decision to embrace the 'condemned-creeds'.

Once we were contracted into the 'condemned-creeds', we found ourselves in a value system that would lead us to our destruction. The poisonous 'condemned-creeds' engraved themselves into our psyches, and we became empty shells; bodies without souls. Suddenly, getting an education and seeking employment became futile undertakings. Our ambitions began to slip away, and we found ourselves lost in a sea of confusion. Lost and confused, we spent

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most of our time in the staircases and the alleys that were in or around our neighborhood.

We looked up to the drug dealers and gangsters (i.e. the older black men who lived in our Xaafadd). We looked up to them, because they, just like us, adhered to the 'condemned-creeds'. We emulated their attitudes, sayings, characteristics, tendencies, preferences, and poses. They were our only archetypes and therefore we became their shadows. They were our teachers and we were their students. Eventually, we became their comrades; and we all collectively embodied the 'condemned-creeds' together.

During this time, most of us were just teenagers, and our families were unable to comprehend the changes that we were undergoing. Our parents worked and toiled so that we could succeed in life. Many of them sacrificed themselves for our futures. So, when they realized that we were throwing our futures away, they became extremely alarmed.

Their selflessness was supposed to make us ambitious, and our success was supposed to symbolize their accomplishment. Our decadence, therefore, signified their failure and heart-break. Unable to comprehend the anti-black world that we lived in, and unwilling to be mere spectators, many of our parents tried to save us from the 'condemned-creeds' with threats and bribes.

We, with blind rebellion, ignored their warnings. Our parents didn't know that the 'condemned-creeds' were the only values that we thought we could adopt. Nevertheless, even if they knew, they probably would've preferred to die rather than witness our slow

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decay. Thus, unable to understand us or change us, many of our parents fell into despair.

At length, many of us reacted to our nonsensical lives and turbulent homes by self-medicating ourselves with marijuana; we smoked our troubles away. Our adventures were becoming wilder and more irrational; for the absence of ambition in our chaotic lives exacerbated our desire for temporary excitement. We were behaving irresponsibly and recklessly, and we were slaves to our whimsical desires; for we sought to sedate ourselves (and ignore the demands of the future) by losing ourselves in an irrational present.

Also, with time, Toronto's capitalistic consumer culture exacerbated our desire to have a steady flow of income. The gender role construction of manhood, which reduces men to their bank accounts, was operational in our Xaafadd; and we also needed money for our expensive addictions and habitual adventures. Thus, with this new demand for funds, we started choosing from the limited careers that reinforced our value system of the 'condemned-creeds'; and as a result, many of my friends found themselves selling drugs, while others chose to commit robberies and some settled for fraud.

At this juncture, and due to our criminal careers, many of my friends were arrested and imprisoned. Suddenly, becoming an imprisoned criminal wasn't just a part of a rap song; rather, it was part of our reality. We used to act like tough criminals; we were now summoned to become that which we pretended to be.

At this moment, it is noteworthy to mention that our perception of the ordeal of imprisonment was quite

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distorted. Indeed, by and large, the image of an imprisoned inmate, who suffers in isolation, should send shivers down the spine of any person. For us, this image symbolized something else; it symbolized a scary reward. Jail scared us, for we heard terrifying stories about the perils that occur therein. Still, going to jail seemed like a rewarding ritual, for we constantly saw the positive treatment that our peers received when they came out of jail.

Upon their return, our recently released peers were admired, rewarded with respect, idealized, and their status in the neighborhood was automatically elevated because they actualized their criminal potential. Indeed, a criminalized boy who became a criminal man, via the ritual of incarceration, was honored and initiated into the society of certified gangsters. He no longer needed to act tough, for he now embodied toughness; and as a result, his loyalty to the 'condemned-creeds' became utterly unquestionable.

Also, I recall that being jailed was a common experience among the older heads that lived in my Xaafadd. Whenever they talked about incidents that occurred in jail, we (me and my friends) would feel excluded. Thus, being imprisoned promised the opportunity to participate in the story telling sessions, wherein everyone shared their in-jail experiences; a feeling of belonging was hence a guaranteed by-product of imprisonment.

With time, and due to the harsh prison sentences which were rapidly dispensed by the courts, many of my friends exchanged their warm souls for cold hearts. They received what I now realize is 'black-time'. 'Black-time' is the extended-jail-time that's specifically

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reserved for black people; it is "interminable, perhaps even incalculable, stalled time" (Sexton, 4), such as George Jackson's death sentence for stealing.

As most of my black friends did 'black-time', their hopefulness for the future died. I personally realized the seriousness of the situation when, on a random day, a childhood friend showed me his newly purchased gun. What unnerved me wasn't the gun itself, rather, it was the uncontrollable excitement that he displayed, and the prideful manner in which he boasted about how easily he swindled the seller. His heart and mind were impervious to his impending doom; and he was oblivious to riskiness of his situation.

After this incident, I realized that everything around me was changing rapidly. Smoking weed and having wild adventures were fun ways to 'kill time'. Carrying guns, committing robberies, and selling drugs, were dangerous ways to 'kill time'. (Here, 'Killing time' is merely a synonym for 'waiting to die')

Soon thereafter, the 'condemned-creeds' evaluative component started to divide the boys in the neighborhood from each other. A dark cloud showered us with misery and every new day seemed drearier. Suddenly, the truth became clear; we were a group of black boys who developed deep friendships in tight-knit community, and we were now about to become a gang. It was time to decide: Remain or Abandon.

For every single one of my black friends, and myself, there was a point of no return. We all foresaw the edge of the cliff wherein the 'condemned-creeds' were going to abandon us. Complete loyalty to the 'condemned-creeds' meant that we had to abandon

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any dreams of a lawful life and peaceful existence. Anti-institutionalism, crime, hedonism, immorality, incarceration, and an early death, either by the police or by a rival, would be our destiny.

Faced with this reality, some of us abandoned this path; others, who were consumed by it for a period of time, eventually found a way to escape their hellish faith. Many more, even at the risk of losing their lives, remained loyal to the 'condemned-creeds' until their dying breath.

Here, each person's level of commitment to the 'condemned-creeds' differed according to their living circumstances. These differences, however, didn't create any variations in our self-sedating routines; for the largest majority of us continued to live for nothing more than fleeting moments of 'fun'; nights full of alcohol, weed, and parties. Very few fully abandoned both the 'condemned-creeds' and the 'fun'; and therefore even those who were on the fence about the creeds, were condemned indirectly by association, because we all had 'fun' together.

This constant self-sedation (with 'fun') distracted us from facing our hopelessness; i.e. our fixed-futures as criminals, vagabonds, and lowlifes. Hence, here, as 'fun' dissimulated frustration, we waited together for death; and in this vortex, we dug our own graves by espousing the 'condemned-creeds'.

This memory of aborted lives pains me. In this instant, rage ruptures my ruminations. As I endeavor to mark the innocent souls of my friends, and as I tie their suffering to the painful paradox of being black in anti-black world, I find myself in despair. I am re-traumatized by the memory of a previous traumatised.



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Here, as I think, reminisce, and write, words fail me. Emotions envelop me. I want to burn the world; the world that burned us; the anti-black world that murdered them.

Amidst these turbulent ruminations, whose murder do I examine? Which friend's dead, or dying, body do I dissect? I recall my old friend *Negus-1*<sup>4</sup>; in my dreams I encounter him wearing his moral fortitude as armor. I recall that his unwavering loyalty, courageous disposition, and mature and melancholy demeanor, marked him as an authority. Indeed, he was far too mature for his age; and he was one of the first boys who embraced the values of the 'condemned creeds' with an unshakable commitment. He had dignity, integrity, and self-respect; a backbone that's never bent.

*Negus-2's* face confronts me whenever I remember *Negus-1*; for they were inseparable. The debt that I owe *Negus-2*, the friend who showed me kindness in world where caring was criminal, is ineffable. He was the only person who had confidence in me when everyone else questioned my loyalty. A natural born leader with a charismatic character and kind heart; his ambitiousness and entrepreneurial spirit left deep impressions upon me. His gentleness was abnormal in a place where cruelty was a norm; he consistently comforted the confused with his supportive solidarity.

Then there is Rocker. I remember rocker as the boy who wanted to be just a regular Somali guy; the black boy whose dreams were shattered by our anti-black

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4 I've given some of my childhood friends Aliases such as *Negus-1*, *negus-2*, etc. I've done this for private reasons.

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city. His warm, welcoming, considerate, caring, and curious soul is burning in a black body that is scarred with marks of resilience. Rocker withstood assaults from every direction (even luck conspired against him), and yet he stands tall and proud in this anti-black world that condemned him and his brother Kermit. Their family always was (and still is) in captivity but full of hope. Burdened with pain, burning with potential, and teeming with optimism, he survived a war that was waged against his existence . . . He was severely injured but he lives on . . .

Here, I feel so much pain and there is so much misery; I see only aborted ambitions, pained black bodies, and fractured futures. Whenever I catch myself reflecting upon the paradoxes that confronted my old friend *Negus-3*, I find myself paralyzed, perplexed, and tense. He bore the burden of being a role model in a world where the 'condemned-creeds' was the norm. With his younger brothers and sister looking up to him, he had to embrace the 'condemned creeds' while telling them not to. As a kid, he was for me the older brother that I never had. When he said to me: "both of our fathers are dead, so we are the same, I got your back", his kind words killed my loneliness.

*Negus-3* lived life while walking on a thin line, a line between hope and despair, playfulness and seriousness, brother and stranger, educator and punisher. My other friend Hero treaded on this same very line. We used to wander the streets from sundown to sunrise, and while we indulged in suicidal fantasies and dangerous habits, he maintained a perfect balance between coldness and warmth, anger and calmness, performance and posture. He had a

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dexterous ability to solve problems, a confidence that astounded me, and a determination that bewildered me. His pain was always hidden, his anger always controlled, and his sadness always undetectable; and yet it was always there . . . just beneath his smile.

His dexterity and determination reminds me of my other friend *Negus-4*. *Negus-4* was the boy who was too smart to be devoured by the anti-black rituals of our city. Unlike me, he knew not to be, what our anti-black world said he should be. He was the boy who became a man too early; the boy who never experienced childhood. He shouldered the responsibility of putting his family first at an age when being irresponsible was the expected norm. He was the only one who rejected the 'condemned-creeds' while living amongst those who embraced it. The invisible line that he treaded was terribly thin; he befriended madness and retained his sanity.

Memories of my childhood with these black boys (boys who were destined to be devoured by an anti-black city) live inside me. Still, as a write, I realize that my accounts of their existences are too shallow and that many more existences need to be accounted for. I want to account for *Negus-5*, and explain how this world injured him. I want to tell you about *Negus-6*, the brother who included me in an alienating world. I feel an urge to relate *Negus-7's* tale; the humor that brought him friends and the confidence that almost killed him.

There is too much to tell!! An unbearable anxiety overwhelms me!! A voice inside my head asks "Who are you to take upon yourself the duty of accounting for their existences?" Another voice replies "who will do it if you don't; for you lived past the poison that

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infected them: the poison of anti-black racism". As these two voices argue, I find myself unwilling to demagnify the collective pained body of the black populace by focusing on the particular pained existences of my black friends.

Yes . . . for now I must silence their cries; I must move ahead, I must keep digging to reveal depths and limits of our collective condition. Still, with that said, it must be stated that we too were 'human'; or at least we thought we were. Indeed, we too had intimate relations and hopeful dreams about bright futures. We too hoped to love, live, and laugh. As we drifted to our demise, we still had moments of love, kindness, and heart-warming joy; and these moments foreshadowed our fleeting innocence and imminent destruction.

Unfortunately, with no one to warn us or protect us, the practice of anti-black racism, which condemned the black children of our city, consumed my neighborhood in its entirety. Friends became enemies, brother and sisters became strangers, and decadence and decay became widespread. Death, despair and depression became the rule, while escape was an exception. Only a few escaped the hellish experience of being black in an anti-black city. I escaped because I had an awakening encounter that traumatized me; and this crisis forced me to ponder upon my future.

Unfortunately, many others didn't have the privilege of reaping the benefits of an awakening encounter . . . Still, having lived through the trauma, I can now confidently assert that the aforementioned neighborhood factors including the 'condemned-creeds', which was (and still is) the value system that governs the psyches of many blacks who live in our

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anti-black city, are the most basic elements that embellished my lived-experience in the Xaafadd that raised me, and in the city that tried to break me.

## 2.0: Peripéteia & Anagnōrisis

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*Peripeteia:*

*“an abrupt turn of events  
or reversal of circumstances”  
– Collins dictionary*

*Anagnōrisis:*

*“the recognition or discovery by the protagonist  
of the identity of some character  
or the nature of his own predicament,  
which leads to the resolution of the plot”  
– Collins dictionary.*

*“The black psyche emerges  
within a context of force,  
or structural violence,  
which is not analogous to the emergence  
of white or non-black psyches”  
Frank B. Wilderson III – The vengeance of vertigo (essay)*

My activities in the condemned-realm, wherein the condemned-creeds was the norm, alarmed my family and extended relatives. My mother considered moving from the Xaafadd when it became clear that my future, and perhaps even my life, was in jeopardy. This realization, which engendered an unbearable anxiety in her, forced us to flee from Toronto. Here, luck was on my side, because my mother could afford escaping. Unlike me, most of my friends didn't have this privilege of being able to escape; unfavorable financial

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circumstances and large families made escape too expensive for them.

When we escaped, we first moved to the city of Edmonton; we lived there for almost five months. For family reasons, we returned to Toronto and moved into a new neighborhood for almost 1 year. In this new neighborhood, I was once again swallowed up by the 'condemned-creeds'. Contact with other condemned souls reactivated old habits and attitudes. Flustered, confused, and frustrated, my mother decided to move again. This time, we left the city and moved to a new city called Kitchener.

These moves from Toronto to Edmonton and then to Kitchener represented fugitive movements; they symbolized moments when running-away became the only viable means to cripple my commitment to the 'condemned-creeds'.

In Kitchener, I was deposited into the basement of my aunt's home and I lived with her family for almost 6 months. Soon thereafter, my mother rented an apartment and we officially settled in Kitchener. The calmness of Kitchener, and the peace that I felt there, healed my confused soul. Far away from the perils of Toronto's anti-black racism, I completed high school; and my love for reading, a love that mutated into hate in Toronto, returned in full force. Also, it was in Kitchener that I began to unlearn the 'condemned creeds'.

The years that followed my departure from Toronto, and arrival to Kitchener, were rejuvenating. I made new friends, abandoned the 'condemned-creeds', and began thinking about my future. I still stayed in touch with some of my friends from the Xaafadd, but our paths were divorced. I was a fugitive and they

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were captives of a tethering terrible city; a city wherein black people were terrorized by anti-black institutions; a city wherein traumatized black boys terrorized each other to avoid confronting the despair that consumed them collectively.

After high school, I traveled for a bit, and then I eventually returned to Toronto when I got accepted into Ryerson University. It was during my 2nd year at Ryerson, that I started to torment myself with questions. Questions such as, why did I escape the fate that ruined my friends? And how could innocent boys become cruel criminals? These questions tortured my soul during sleepless nights. Thus, my quest for answers commenced.

I dedicated myself towards an exhausting, self-imposed, and time-consuming program of self-education. I sought knowledge as an end in-itself, for the unknown only reveals itself to those who nurture their curiosity.

While satisfying my intellectual curiosity, I discovered Paulo Freire's book 'The pedagogy of the oppressed'. This book, was "a combination of philosophical, political, and educational theory. (In it) Freire outlines a theory of oppression and the source of liberation", and he proves that "the key to liberation is the awakening of critical awareness and the thinking process in the individual." Source

This book unified the plight of the oppressed with the transformational power of education. Hence, as I devoured it, I became aware that a school could both educate and indoctrinate; and that education had the potential to either nourish and liberate the mind, or poison and oppress it.



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Soon thereafter, the significance of education for the lives of blacks, who were (and still are) violated by the practice of anti-black racism, engraved itself onto my consciousness when Freire asserted that:

“There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the young generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the “practice of freedom”, the means by which men and women transform their world.” (Freire, 34)

I suddenly became aware that a good education emphasizes authenticity rather than conformity, thereby giving children the opportunity to transform their reality. The idea that an education could transform a person's mind, and thus transform their reality, was foreign to me. Still, this foreign idea was strangely exhilarating.

While digesting these rejuvenating ideas, I began to remember the awful and traumatic memories of my experiences in Toronto's public Schools. Schools wherein authenticity was always penalized with detentions, suspensions, and expulsions; and wherein curiosity was a forbidden characteristic.

Indeed, for us, the black youth of yesteryear, who didn't even get the opportunity to reap the benefits of a proper indoctrination, Freire's form of education was utterly unimaginable.

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Still, being intrigued and seeking transformation, I found further guidance when Freire exclaimed that:

as people, "simultaneously reflecting on themselves and on the world, increase their perception, they begin to direct their observation towards previously inconspicuous phenomena. That which had existed objectively, but had not been perceived in its deeper implications (if it was perceived at all) begins to stand out, assuming the character of a problem and therefore a challenge." (Freire, 83)

While contemplating upon his words, I found myself overwhelmed with disturbing recollections. Memories of dismissive teachers who reprimanded me, and my black friends, for our inquisitiveness; memories of principals who punished us for every offense; and memories of our parents, who were disrespected and dismissed by our bureaucratic and hostile teachers; these memories rushed rapidly to my consciousness.

I was confronted with the fact that my experience inside Toronto's public schools was tremendously traumatizing; and I was sure that my black friends were traumatized as well. Realizing that I was poisoned and indoctrinated inside Toronto's public schools; the construct of 'public-education', which was initially an inconspicuous phenomenon, began to assume the character of a problem.

Unable to ignore this problem, and determined to confront it, I began to examine it by reading literature that focused on public education. I read books such as "Education apartheid in America - the shame of a nation", "anti-racist education theory and practice",

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and “restacking the deck”. I read a dissertation that was titled “Exploring the Narrative Experience of Somali-Djibouti Youth in and about Ottawa public schools”. I also spoke to various community leaders, social activists, teachers, parents, and students.

After a while, I came to the disconcerting realization that Toronto's public schools were indeed targeting us (the black youth of Toronto) and poisoning our minds. This undeniable fact was further strengthened when I read the Toronto Distinct School Board's Human rights policy, wherein they had a clause describing a poisoned educational environment. The formulation of a poisoned environment, which was provided in the Toronto District School Board policies, perfectly mirrored the environment of the public schools that I attended.

Moreover, insofar as the practice of anti-black racism, which is a norm in our anti-black city, targets, traumatizes and terminates black people, and insofar as we spent the majority of our time inside our public schools, I believe that our schools were the only places wherein we, as black students, could've acquired the tools to understand, overcome, and transform our condition. Instead, our schools became the place wherein we were managed, disciplined, demoralized, and mentally incapacitated.

Yes . . . I perceive now,  
what I couldn't notice back then.  
I see the unseen mandates,  
that govern our seen reality.

Yes . . . I see now that our public schools,  
like other public institutions,  
were burdened with the vicious task,  
of reproducing the practice of anti-black racism;  
and therefore our dreams and ambitions,  
were demolished by the people,  
who were supposed to nurture us.

I see now that, inside our anti-black public schools,  
our minds were poisoned, our potential was strangled  
to death, our curiosity and youthful inquisitiveness was  
extinguished, and we were injected with the low-self-  
esteem, and hopelessness, that caused our  
degeneracy and decay. These insights, which became  
obvious only in retrospect, led me to embrace the  
terrible truth, that both our bodies and our minds were  
targeted for extermination because of our black skin.

Yes . . . we were simultaneously,  
coerced to become the evil criminal 'other',  
and denied the opportunity  
to overcome this coercion.

Hence, hoping to create a defense mechanism to  
protect my people, I tried to identify how exactly we  
were attacked? During this time, I came across the  
concept of structural violence. I first came across this  
concept while watching a lecture series. After  
watching the lecture series, and grasping the idea of  
structural violence, I read the publication wherein the  
concept of structural violence was first put forth. This  
publication was written by a mathematician called

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Johan Galtung. It was titled “violence, peace, and peace research”.

After reading this publication, the fact that our public education system was targeting, traumatizing, and terminating the potential of black students inside its public schools, through the practice of structural violence, became unquestionable. Thus, now, in order to demonstrate the way in which I’ve arrived at this conclusion, we will briefly acquaint ourselves with the concept of structural violence.

### 3.0: On structural Violence

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*“The most invasive forms of . . . violence,  
lie not in . . . exhibitions of “extreme” suffering  
or in what we see,  
but in what we don’t see.”  
Saidiya Hartman- scenes of subjection (book)*

To fully understand the concept of structural violence, we must first raise a very fundamental question; this question is: Could a structure be violent? To answer this question, we should first know what the words ‘structure’ and ‘violent’ mean. So, let’s tackle the first word. A structure, to be exact, is defined as a complex object that is composed of different elements and parts. For the second word, which is violence, we shall employ a particular definition which was crafted by Johan Galtung; Galtung was the Norwegian sociologist and mathematician who invented the concept of structural violence.

Galtung contended that violence is committed in any situation where individuals are being influenced so that their actual (bodily and mental) abilities are below their potential (bodily and mental) abilities. This complex definition of violence is deliberately broad; and it entails different types of violence, such as direct, structural, and cultural violence. Being essentially inclusive, this definition leaves room for other emerging abstractions of violence. Thus, it overrides the rigid, exclusive, naive, and popularized conceptualization of

violence, which often equates violence with (and limits it to) physical violence.

Since we've explained the key words in our question, let's now craft a response to our query. Firstly, it is obvious that the existence of a detailed arrangement of elements (a structure) signifies a subject (an architect), thus without an architect a structure cannot come into existence. Secondly, since architects are people, and since people can commit violence, we come to the inevitable conclusion that architects can commit violence as well. So, if we accept that structures are created for specific purposes and by architects, then we must also admit that an architect could create a structure in order to commit violence. Hence, we can logically assert that a structure could in-fact commit violence.

Since we know that a structure could commit violence, we must also, in order to defend ourselves, be able to determine when a structure is actually committing violence. In an effort to distinguish violent structures from non-violent structures, I've erected a criterion by fusing the definitions of the words structure and violence. This criterion, which was designed to determine whether a structure is violent or not, states that *"a structure is undeniably violent when its organization, and the relations between its parts or elements, begins to negatively influence people, so that their actual (bodily and mental) abilities are below their potential (bodily and mental) abilities"*.

Still, even with such a clear criterion, detecting structural violence is a dauntingly difficult problem. The obstacles that render detection impractical shall be shortly itemized. For now, we shall endeavor to

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contextualize our distinct formulation of structural violence by contrasting it with another type of violence; namely direct violence.

Direct violence, which is committed through a specific and identifiable actor, always entails a clear perpetrator-victim relation. For example: A shooting or stabbing would be classified as direct violence. On the other hand, structural Violence, which is committed through a structure, has no visible actors. Thus, there are no clear perpetrator-victim relations.

For example: The creation of residential schools in Canada, wherein indigenous children were (a) stolen from their parents, (b) forcefully imprisoned inside white supremacist schools, (c) terrorized into hating themselves and their culture, and (d) drugged, raped, brainwashed and coerced to commit suicide, is an example of structural violence in motion. Here, clearly, schools became violent structures that kill children.



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To further demonstrate the differences between these two forms of violence, please consider the following table.

<b>Direct violence</b>	<b>Structural violence</b>
Recognized at the Individual Level	Recognized at the collective Level
Targeted against individuals	Targeted against social groups
Easily identifiable	Difficult to identify
Unstable, intrusive, dramatic, Aggressive	Stable, subtle, systematic
Intentional violence	Violence independent to Intent
Manifests as a product of Criminality	Manifests as: Economic exploitation and political repression
Occurs in a specific event, moment in time	Occurs in a process
Has a specific and identifiable Actor	Faceless
Generally death through direct force	Generally death through Deprivation
Unacceptable violence	Normalized and acceptable Violence

(Campbell, pg.6)

We can see from this table that structural violence is very different from direct violence. Indeed, it is undeniable that most of the images that come to our head, when we think of the word violence, signify the idea of direct violence. We believe that physical violence is the only type of violence that exists; we are unaware of the perils of structural violence; and as a result, we are oblivious to structural venoms that urgently require our immediate attention.

Recognizing our ignorance, we still cannot blame ourselves for not being aware of the insidiousness of structural violence; for there are many factors which distract us from, and distort our perception of, the concept and practice of structural violence. To be specific, there are six factors that render structural violence undetectable; now let's briefly overview these factors.

### (1) The practice of structural violence is never obvious.

It's very difficult to label an act as being violent if its consequences are indiscernible. The act of structural violence is never unified with its consequence; thus, the relationship between the perpetrator who commits the act of structural violence, and the consequence of the act which harms the victim, is never direct. Hence, the fundamental relationship between the act and the consequence is always hidden. In addition, since the act and the consequence aren't unified, it is evident that, unlike direct violence which occurs abruptly, structural violence unfolds gradually; and therefore detecting it takes time and requires patience. In a world where the immediate satisfaction of the arbitrary

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desires of over-indulgent and hedonistic consumers is a norm, unflinching patience is rare trait.

### (2) The perpetrator and the victim are hard to locate.

A violent structure doesn't necessarily need a consistent actor, or a continuous action, to perpetuate the violence and sustain itself. Thus, perpetrators of structural violence are generally inactive and they are usually hard to locate. The victims also are hard to locate, for there are many layers of oppression and victimization which, as a result of structural violence, overlap one another. Indeed, the task of separating the victims from the perpetrators becomes complicated when we attempt to distinguish between, the violence which was inflicted by the perpetrators on the victims, and the violence which those victims inflicted on their respective victims. Thence, we are hindered by the cycle of violence, for it obstructs the identification process which could disrupt the practice structural violence.

### (3) The Positive approach to influence neutralizes victims.

Galtung's definition of violence places emphasis on how a structure influences people. In his publication titled "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research", he proposed two approaches of influence. One of them is the Positive approach to influence, while the other is the negative approach to influence. The positive approach utilizes a reward system to pacify its victim. This initial pacification coerces the victim to rationalize

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and justify their own victimization. Their own justifications eventually evolve into well-structured denial systems. Therefore, the justification and denial systems which are erected by the victim render structural violence invisible. Thus, victims are encouraged to accept their condition, and work towards maintaining it, rather than overcoming it.

### (4) The negative approach to influence intimidates victims.

This approach to influence utilizes a punitive system. So, if a person tries to retaliate against a violent structure, then the perpetrators of the violence will try to control and silence the person. The perpetrators could punish the retaliator in various manners. For instance, existing privileges could get retracted. Social exclusion could be employed, wherein interactions with former colleagues, friends, and relatives could become poisonous and hostile. Also, loss of financial stability is a serious threat, for one could lose one's job and get excluded from future opportunities. The more relentless and uncompromising the victim is, the graver the punishments become. Thus, this punitive approach could eventually lead to imprisonment, torture, and death.

### (5) The prioritization of subjective intentions, over objective consequences, undermines accountability.

The practice of structural violence is hard to detect because priority is given to the subjective intentions of the individuals responsible for the structure, rather than

the objective consequences of the structure itself. In addition, the concept of guilt has historically been connected more to intentions than consequences, and this is problematic because intentions are intangible and changeable private thoughts.

Due to the emphasis placed on intentions, individuals who are responsible for perpetuating structural violence tend to claim ignorance and evade responsibility; and when ignorance becomes a permanent excuse that is evoked whenever accountability is demanded, the task of differentiating intended violence from non-intended violence becomes difficult.

### (6) Structural violence shows stability.

Since structural violence is embedded within a structure, it's always stable; for most structures require stability in order to operate. Structures/Institutions are stable when they are rule-governed and when they function in a controlled and ordered manner. This type of stability that characterizes structures leads us to believe that a structure cannot be violent. This is mainly because the practice of structural violence doesn't match our understanding of violence as being dramatic and sporadic. Indeed, Johan Galtung in his article "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research" states that "Personal and direct violence represents change and dynamism. Not only ripples on waves, but waves on otherwise tranquil waters. Structural violence is silent, it does not show- it is essentially static, it is the tranquil waters." (Galtung, 173)

As a consequence of these six factors, and many others which haven't been mentioned here, the practice of structural violence is almost always invisible. The invisible character of this practice renders the procedures of detection and disruption, which are necessary for dismantling and destroying violent structures, into ineffective stratagems.

Still, we shouldn't despair, for within our problem is the solution that we seek. Indeed, if the aforementioned factors are used as a compass, to discover the violence that lays dormant in the appearance of virtue, then our ineffective stratagems could be revived and utilized to reveal the dangerous, mechanical, brutal, stable, and vicious nature of structural violence.

During such an endeavor, a terrible turbulence is bound to erupt, and amidst the ensuing chaos, random elements shall be coupled and re-established as acts of structural violence and their respective consequences. Once these unified causalities are re-established, the random character of these associations will evaporate; and thus, they'll become too obvious to ignore.

As these causalities become logical and utterly irrefutable, the invisibility of structural violence will vanish; and since visible violence tends to provoke vehement opposition, the oppressed will valiantly meet their oppressors to defend their dignity. Thus, the perpetrators of structural violence, while trembling with a guilty conscience, shall encounter an indignant populace; and on a day fraught with fury and full of wrath, a just ramification shall be accorded to their vile existence.

## 4.0: Arday madow iyo dugsiy caddaan-ah (Black students & white schools)

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*“Abeesadii lix jir kugu qaniintaa  
lixdan jir bay kugu dishaa”  
(A snake-bite received at the age of six  
kills you at the age of sixty).  
– Somali proverb*

Having briefly over-viewed the concept of structural violence, it is noteworthy to mention that our brief glance was an inadequate glimpse of this immensely complex concept. Indeed, a much more rewarding grasp of this concept, could be achieved by reading Galtung’s publication, which is titled as "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research". With this suggestion in mind, I shall now discuss the impact that this concept had on me, and the discomforting facts that it forced me to face.

When I initially learned about structural violence, I was petrified by the fact that a structure could be violent. Still, through my fears, this concept was able to enhance my perception, for it connected my fragmented experiences, intuitions, and conclusions to one another.

Suddenly . . .

{e} The invisible associations between the disconnected details of my educational experiences in school, and the aforementioned neighborhood factors, became unified.

{x} The destructive decisions and hedonistic habits that we, as black youth, indulged in, became tied to our nihilistic attitudes (i.e, the masks that we displayed to defend ourselves from our city's anti-black racism).

{u} The internal turbulence, the permanent anxiety, and the demoralizing state of agony that burdened our families, became coupled with the pernicious anti-black morality that posited us as the evil criminal 'other'.

{l} The depression, despair, and apathy that hovered over us, and our enthusiastic submission to the 'condemned-creeds', became connected to our low socio-economic status and racial situation.

{y} Our heavyhearted hopelessness and unconscious desire to forfeit life, became attached to our parents desire to sacrifice their lives; so that we can achieve their ideals and satisfy their unexamined expectations.

{o} The fact that we were criminalized children, who became career criminals, became associated with the fact that we were entirely disengaged from, and unwilling to partake in, our anti-black public schools.



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The re-establishment of these linkages, wherein hidden associations became visible, evinced a peculiar order; an order that was always operational in the logically bound (and yet separated) components, that facilitated the practice of structural violence. Once these formerly random and unrelated components re-emerged as logically tied antecedents and consequences, it became evident that they were merely a fraction of a larger network.

Thence, feeling Endarkened, I decided to recall and record the forgotten school incidents that insidiously poisoned my existence; and I carried out this mission by time traveling back into the days when I was just another black school boy.

With these remarks, I shall now share some of these forgotten incidents; and they will be accompanied by some radical rationalizations that capture the core character of the implicit war that was waged against us (black students).

I seek, here, to unveil the war that subtly morphed our classrooms into battlefields, and our public schools into war zones; a war that slowly secured our destruction in the Xaafadd that sequestered us. Hence, to reveal this concealed war, I shall share five disquisitions; and each disquisition shall disclose a particular destructive force that poisoned our potential; mediums via which black students were (and still are) terrorized.

## Disquisition 1: On punishment and exile

*“The Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power.”*  
*Michael Foucault- Discipline and punish (book)*

For us, in this day and age, the word discipline is interchangeable with the words punishment and control; and this interchangeability is rarely questioned. To confront and capture the contorted character and arbitrary attitude of our educational institutions disciplinary tactics, this interchangeability must be summoned, examined, and dismantled. Thus, to assess the validity of this interchangeability, we ask, what is the original meaning of the term ‘discipline’? What picture does this signal signify?

In response, we assert that “the term discipline originally meant to educate” (Gordon, “Disciplinary decadence”, 3). This forgotten fact reveals that discipline signifies the activity of educating. Hence, discipline isn’t a mere component of education; rather, it is the process of education. The term ‘disciplined’, on the other hand, references the acquisition of mastery.

The process of education is multi-layered and therefore students become disciplined (attain mastery) gradually. In the beginning, the student who learns to “consider his (or her) actions, to undertake them deliberately, is in so far forth disciplined” (Gordon, “Disciplinary decadence”, 3). Then, the student who learns to “endure in an intelligently chosen course in

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face of distraction, confusion, and difficulty" is perceived as disciplined (Gordon, "Disciplinary decadence", 3). Towards the end, if the student has the ability "to know what one is to do, and to move to do it promptly, and by use of requisite means" (Gordon, "Disciplinary decadence", 3) then the student has attained mastery.

At this stage, the student becomes the master because he/she has "power at command; mastery of the resources available for carrying through the action undertaken" (Gordon, "Disciplinary decadence", 3). It is evident, then, that the process of education (i.e. discipline) is supposed to train students to attain mastery (i.e. become disciplined).

Unfortunately, these interpretations of the terms 'discipline' and 'disciplined' were replaced with their connotations; and with time, the connotations that were associated with these words "have shifted considerably to now referring in English to processes of control" (Gordon, "Disciplinary decadence", 3). Hence, the current interchangeability between discipline and punishment exists as a consequence of this shift in connotations.

This un-interrogated interchangeability perverts our public educational system's utilization of the term discipline, and it renders the functions of its disciplinary procedures destructive. Additionally, pervasive connotations of discipline such as punishment and control, which are used in our public schools, are essentially anti-education; for they undermine the true purpose of education, which is to train students to become disciplined (i.e. attain mastery).

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Thus, the currently normalized anti-education attitude of our anti-black public schools is rooted in this bastardization of the term discipline; and as a result of this bastardization, Toronto's public schools incessantly assail black students with the severest forms of punishment.

Indeed, when I was in high school, and while I still lived in the Xaafadd, I recall that suspensions and expulsions were a norm among the black students in my school. We were criminalized with a merciless and absolutely punitive practice; called the zero-tolerance practice.

This practice, which was utterly destructive, transformed our school into a military base; and our teachers, who morphed into officers, were primarily focused on punishing and managing, rather than educating, us. Blinded by their delusions, our teachers perceived us as deviants who needed to be controlled with fear; and as a result, they treated us as hopeless misfits who were bound to become future criminals.

While they interacted with the stereotypes that they imposed on our bodies, their actions towards us were very vicious. Their dogmatic demeanors were disrespectful; and the military tactics which they employed to handle us reinforced the anti-black racism that pervaded our school. Generally, any inappropriate act that we committed, even if it was merely playful, was always treated in the sternest manner; and we were constantly harshly reprimanded for trivial offenses like coming to class late or talking in class or contesting a point passionately.

Suspensions and expulsions, which were harsh punishments, and which were supposed to be used

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conservatively, were the only punishments we ever received; and lenient punishments, such as detentions, in-school suspensions, and mediations, were often preserved for non-black students.

Eventually, suspensions and expulsions became a normal component of our educational experience. In fact, some of us, who became accustomed to being exiled from our high school, actively pursued suspensions; thereby choosing exile over imprisonment. Indeed, the hatred that we harbored for our school reconstituted suspensions as vacations; and the relief that we felt when we were suspended, reflected the agony that beset us when we were forced and coerced to embrace, and never question, the tyrannical character of our oppressive anti-black public schools.

If the interchangeability of the term discipline with its connotation's, formed the conditions that legitimized the destructive demeanor of our anti-black public schools, then the hidden elements that rationalized the repressive tactics that school personnel utilize, to control mal-adjusted students, are now visible. How, then, are we to sever our schools from the connotations of discipline that distribute decadence? What will it take to transfix and terminate these decaying foundations? Who will defend us from the repressive rituals that normalize our banishment?

Furthermore, insofar as the city-wide practice of anti-black racism, which transforms black children into targets destined for termination, encourages our public schools to severely punish us for being black (which is the case); and insofar as were continuously exiled from the place where we are supposed to get nurtured

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(which is the case); then the decision by some of us to choose exile over imprisonment appears completely rational, for our absence was (and still is) ritualized. Still, this irrational rationality that transforms punishment into positivity is merely a consequence of the transgressions that are committed against us by our anti-black public schools. How, then, can we cure the diseased minds of anti-black school agents?

### **Disquisition 2: On dream destroyers and dangerous dialogues**

*“Almost all people of all eras are hypnotics.  
Their beliefs are induced beliefs.  
The proper authority saw to it  
that the proper belief should be induced,  
and [that] the people believed properly.”  
Charles Fort - the Book of the Damned (book)*

When I was in high school, every student had to be enrolled in either an academic program or an applied program; and the practice of separating students into different programs was called streaming. The students who were enrolled in the academic program were given advanced classes that prepared them for university; and they were destined to become members of the professional workforce. The students who were enrolled in the applied program were given simplified courses that prepared them for college; and they were destined to become unskilled or skilled laborers.

Thus, with this classificatory system in place, our personal ambitions as students, and our middle school

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grades, were coupled with the guidance of our parents and the professional opinion of our school counselors, to determine the type of program that we enrolled in.

With this in mind, it's necessary to recognize that for us (black students) the practice of streaming was utilized to control and limit, rather than support and guide, our potential. Indeed, our schools streaming practice had an explicit and implicit objective. The explicit objective was to give all students the opportunity to choose a career direction, and to prepare them for it. The implicit objective was to limit the black student populace to the applied program. Hence, the streaming practices of our school, just like the punishment procedures, carried out the insidious task of systematically destroying our potential.

To be specific, this task was carried out by the guidance counselors of our anti-black public schools. These guidance counselors accomplished the implicit objective of the streaming practice through a well-designed, multifaceted, 'consent-extracting scheme'. This scheme, which was aimed at our delicate minds, was designed to (a) convince black students to enroll into the applied program, (b) pressure black students to remain in the applied program, and (c) discourage black students from transferring into the academic program.

In order to achieve the implicit objective of streaming, the consent-extracting scheme was employed by guidance counselors during career sessions. In these sessions, wherein guidance counselors held personal meetings with individual students, students articulated their career ambitions to counselors who were supposed to (a) use their

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expertise to judge the viability of these ambitions, and (b) offer career recommendations to the students.

They didn't, however, do what they were supposed to; for during these sessions, guidance counselors assisted non-black students by concertizing their unexamined ambitions, while cruelly crippling the educational careers of black students by crushing their dreams.

Indeed, I myself was victimized by the hostile maneuverers of my public schools guidance counselor. During my career session, the guidance counselor, who was a white woman, skilfully controlled the levels of comfort and discomfort that I felt; and she used my ambitions and dreams as leverage to plant seeds of self-doubt in my mind. Then, she aggressively assailed my self-confidence and emphasized my failures. Unable to defend myself, I broke down and encountered myself through her gaze as an incapable, ill-equipped, naive and stupid, black boy.

Insidiously, she used psycho-emotional tactics to confuse and control my thoughts; and by occasionally summoning the self-doubt that she instilled in my mind, she managed my frantic reactions. After thoroughly manipulating me, she re-presented herself as the savior who could eliminate my anxiety. Indeed, she reconstituted herself as a wise guide with paternal powers that can predict unknown futures; and with a persuasive appeal to enroll into the applied program, she coerced me to consent to her recommendations.

Fortunately, my mother intervened and rejected the recommendations of the counselor; and as a result, I was enrolled in the academic program. Still, my narrow escape shouldn't be constituted as a norm; for



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it is a rarity. Indeed, while I was forced to reject the unfounded recommendations of my school counselor, many of my black brothers and sisters, who nurtured their dreams in our anti-black schools, permanently suffered for embracing the invalid assertions of their anti-black guidance counselors.

Indeed, far too many of us have innocently engaged in conversations that were designed to destroy our dreams; conversations with counselors who deliberately endeavored to dissuade us from actualizing our ambitions. During these conversations, these charlatans and dexterous dream destroyers dismantled our souls and crippled our hearts; and the powerlessness that we felt in those career sessions scarred many of us permanently.

Unfortunately, our pain is meaningless, for many more continue to suffer. Indeed, day after day, a bright-eyed black student is summoned into a dream destroyer's (guidance counselor) office. Suddenly, this unsuspecting black child finds himself/herself ambushed by the dream destroyer's 'consent-extracting scheme'; and as the prey of her predatory performance, this vulnerable child's self-esteem is torn to shreds.

Leaving her office, feeling broken and hopeless, this black child's scars engender crippling complexes; a deep doubt in oneself that destroys confidence. The dream destroyer might feel guilty or glad for doing her duty; but regardless of her feelings, she will do her duty. Who, then, will stop her pernicious program? Should we, the black student populace, always leave career sessions with broken hearts and crushed dreams? How

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can we defend ourselves against the consent-extracting scheme?

### Disquisition 3: On modern eugenics

*“The language of psychiatry . . .*

*is a monologue of reason about madness”*

*Michael Foucault- Madness and civilization (book)*

The utilization of pseudo-science as a means to legitimize the violent destruction of a particular population isn't new to Canada. The epoch of eugenics<sup>5</sup>, wherein marginalized populations in Canada were determined as biologically deficient and then physically neutered, is still fresh in our memory. The spirit of eugenics, however, has been reincarnated, restructured, and re-entrenched into our modern city via the pseudo-scientific field of mental health.

Hence, instead of neutering the genitals of destitute demographics, modern eugenics (mental health) seeks to neuter the minds of peripheral populaces. In the city of Toronto, the peripheral populace is the black

5“The science of eugenics, which came into prominence during the late nineteenth century, was concerned with improving the human race. Eugenists believed that natural selection was insufficient, and they sought to influence human evolution by weeding out undesirables. A combination of heavy immigration and a fear that undesirables were reproducing at a high rate contributed to the popularization of eugenics in Canada.” (Source)

“The eugenists included people in the medical profession, psychiatry, politicians, such as the Lieutenant-Governor Dr Herbert Bruce, university professors, and the clergy of all denominations – Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian – except Roman Catholic.” (Source-2)

“The most damaging sterilization program in Canadian history was afforded via the passing of the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act of 1928. From the years 1928 to 1972, sterilizations, both compulsory and optional, were performed on nearly 3000 “unfit” individuals of varying ages and ethnicities. In total, over 2800 [medical] procedures were performed.” (Source-3)

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populace; and the nexus wherein modern eugenics is functionalized is our public schools. Thus, within our anti-black public schools, black students were (and still are) mentally neutered via the medium of special education.

We, as blacks, have failed to perceive special education as mental neutering because (a) the dubious and arbitrary rationalizations of the DSM (The diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders) are safeguarded with the shield of science, (b) the medical jargons of abrasive school authorities, who worship science and preach from the DSM, disguises the perniciousness of special education procedures and programs, and (c) mental neutering (special education) has become naturalized and normalized via the media.

As a result of these obstacles, the unexamined assumptions that normalize special education are rarely revealed publicly!!! This discreetness has blinded us from seeing our situation!! Thence, while we've naively overestimated our public education system's benevolence, our schools have focused on functionalizing the medium of special education; and via this medium, they've targeted our vulnerable black students at an early age.

Indeed, in elementary school, anti-black school agents enthusiastically, and arbitrarily, assign educational disorders to black children; and as a result, these students find themselves stamped with a permanent seal of stupidity. More exactly, during these foundation-forming grades, black students are (a) psychologically assessed with arbitrary surveys, (b) diagnosed with imagined disorders, (c) given medical

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treatment (medicine such as Ritalin), and (d) moved into separate classrooms, which are often located within the schools, with other disenfranchised black students.

In these special education rooms, which are more like waiting rooms, black students are coerced to contemplate upon their condition and accept their situation; and in a dazed stupor they decay and deteriorate mentally. Separated from their peers on a daily basis, they are constantly reminded that they have a mental disorder. Burdened by anguish, abandoned, and alone, these students are condemned to a purgatory, permanent, and futureless present. Thus, in our anti-black public schools, they become the symbolic representation of an abnormal instability; they are institutionally posited as being beyond repair.

Crippled and cursed, the self-confidence of these black students, who are stamped and stigmatized with mental disorders, is rarely revived. Separated and secluded, these students are poisoned with an unparalleled self-doubt. Believing that their minds are diseased, they distrust their thoughts and see themselves as inherently defective. Once this self-perception is solidified in their minds, they discard their hopes and dreams and forgo their futures. Their individual will to power is sucked out of their souls; and they undergo the daily terror of being regimented to obey the tone and temper of their projected enslavement.

Tyranny, however, trembles when resisted with truth, and where ever injustice resides justice is born. Thence, amidst our anti-black schools, some black students

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resist the totalizing prescriptions of the school psychologists. Faced with resistance, Anti-black school agents summon the objectivity of science to shield themselves from the judgmental gazes of cognizant children. These school agents morph into priests of science, and they preach that "in the psychological field the abnormal is he who demands, appeals, and begs" (Fanon, 121) so be quite and stop complaining.

Thus, black students, who were already posited as the evil, criminal, and ugly 'other', are expected to never question or appeal against the anti-black racism that they are subjected to; and any concerted appeal against anguish, or demand for justice, is reduced to a mental abnormality. To become normal they are required to embrace the values of their anti-black schools; and therefore, to escape the stigma of a medically approved stamp of mental inferiority, they are told to learn to become obedient objects devoid of agency.

My agency is still intact, for I had the privilege of escaping the wide net that was cast by our public education system's special education department. While no psychological assessments were conducted on me, many of my black friends were captured by the net of special education; and like a fish gasping for air, life was slowly sucked out them.

The realization that my peers were mentally neutered presented itself to me after their souls were crushed; for it was through literature and time-travelling meditations that their pain became my burden. With this fact in mind, and in an effort to contextualize our discussion on special education, I shall now provide a

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recent example wherein the department of special education tried to mentally neuter a black child.

A few years ago, I worked as an advocate for parents who needed to defend themselves from Toronto's anti-black public schools. In one case, a black mother discovered that her son, who was in elementary school, was (a) psychologically assessed, (b) given an I.E.P (individual education plan), and (c) transferred from the regular classroom and to the special education room. She became aware of the transfer a full year after it first occurred. Thus, for one whole year, and without her notification, her son was treated as having an educational disorder.

To investigate the case, an interview was conducted between the mother, the son, and a school representative; and during the exchange, the whole dialogue was transcribed and audio-taped. After the interview, the school representative admitted that the school medically assessed the boy, and then transferred him from his regular classes and to the special education classes, without the parent's notification.

This example is merely a particular instantiation of general pattern; in other words, it is business as usual. If we wouldn't have intervened, the black boy would have been another mentally neutered black student; and special education, as form of modern eugenics, would have achieved its objective.

Black students, who are already targeted and traumatized within Toronto's anti-black public schools, suffer the further injury of being mentally neutered by the special education department; is this not wicked? Who, then, is going to defend black students from the

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totalizing and tyrannical tendencies of modern eugenics and its mental neutering procedures? As we ask these queries, and ponder upon this war that's waged against the black mind, the mentally neutered black child lives a life of lifelessness!! ; And the soul of this child, who's denied a soul, weeps and asks: is the spectator not as guilty as the criminal?

### **Disquisition 4: On the invisible prefix**

*"I think a lot of people don't have any idea  
of how deeply segregated our schools have become all over again.  
Most textbooks are not honest in what they teach"*  
*Jonathan Kozol - Author of 'The shame of a nation'*

The educational curriculum is a central component of our school system, but in order to grasp the core character of the curriculum, we must position it within the context of the tactical assaults which were, and still are, carried out against black students. These targeted tactics, which were designed to disorient and destroy us, include (a) mental neutering (special education) practices, (b) the streaming process and the C.E.S (Consent extracting scheme) and (c) the punishment (disciplinary) procedures. Hence, it is within the context of these tactics, that our schools curriculum reveals itself as an indoctrination tool that's designed to make students hate education.

From a general perspective, all public school students, even the most intelligent students, feel the meaninglessness of formal education. They are forced to study subjects that they view as irrelevant to their lives; and they're tested on courses that they neither

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understand nor care for. This over-presence of meaninglessness binds the process-of-education with the place-of-education; and since our anti-black public schools are characteristically tyrannical, most students who hate school tend to also hate educational activities such as reading and writing.

In regards to black students, the situation is quite dire, for our school system has skilfully omitted anything about black people from its curriculum. Also, within our public schools, Eurocentric knowledge is posited as objective and neutral knowledge; and this subjective and biased curriculum normalizes European standards and ideologies, while demonizing difference. Thus, the meaninglessness of the curriculum, and the normalization of white education (as objective and neutral), augments the anguish that permeates the peculiar situation of black students.

Moreover, educational engagement with the curriculum presupposes an active and present student. Sadly, most black students are (a) exiled from school, (b) streamed into dispiriting applied programs and (c) segregated in special education zones; and they therefore tend to be too traumatized to engage with our public school's anti-black curriculum.

Personally, I recall that throughout my educational experience in Toronto's public schools, the curriculum was something that was never discussed or questioned; and the fact that the curriculum was unquestionable, was reflected in the moments when someone tried to raise questions about the validity of the curriculum.

When we asked our teachers why other non-European histories weren't taught during the history class, and when some students articulated that they



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felt that history class was actually synonymous with European history class, we were harshly reprimanded and silenced. Indeed, the teachers always expected us to accept their appeals to the curriculum as an authority; and if we refused to accept the curriculum's authority, then we were dismissed and punished.

The truth, however, didn't escape us. Shielding our shattered souls with our disengaged demeanors, we remained engaged from the margins. We knew that every subject (math, science, English, geography, history, drama) was missing the prefix "white"; and the absence of this prefix, which was an unstated known, stabilized the absence of everything that's black. Thinking these thoughts, we were still too afraid to challenge the curriculum, for we were constantly reminded by our anti-black teachers that it's better to disengage, than to engage and suffer.

Now, however, it is clear to me that the insertion of the invisible prefix 'white' could contextualize the propaganda that's disseminated as knowledge in our public schools; Why, then, is the prefix 'white' invisible?

It deserves its rightful space next to every subject name; does it not? Moreover, what about black students who are hungry for un-whitewashed knowledge? What type of curriculum will answer their existential questions? Who can stimulate their curiosity and encourage their queries? And most importantly, what will it take to dismantle the current curriculum and end the white propaganda that is spews?

## Disquisition 5: On banned blacks bonds

*“Every terrorist regime in the world  
uses isolation to break people's spirits”  
Bell hooks- Commencement Speech  
at Southwestern University in Georgetown*

*“Beneath these faces, these clothes,  
accents, rudeness's,  
was power and sorrow,  
both un-admitted, unrealized,  
the power of inventors,  
the sorrow of the disconnected.”  
James Baldwin - Giovanni's Room (book)*

Do teachers understand the seriousness of their task? Do they feel the burden of their function on their shoulders when they move? Why are black male teachers so rare? These are three questions that I wrestle with whenever I ruminate upon our educational system's workforce. As a middle-school black student, I recall that I was one of the lucky students who had the privilege of being taught by a black teacher. This black teacher had an immense influence on all the black students in the school; and although he was sever and strict, he still managed to treat us with the deep care and devotion that parents display when they're interacting with their children.

We learned the formal curriculum in his class, but we also learned informal tactics and survival strategies that black people, who seek to survive in this anti-black

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city, have to master. He was, undeniably, a black token with risky edge; for he warned us to be weary of the white smiles that dig wide graves for black children.

He was both a role model and a dexterous educator; and when I recall his committed and caring character, I find myself disconcerted by the fact that he was the only black male teacher that I ever had. Moreover, during my tenure in Toronto's public schools, most of my teachers were white women; and inside school, white women were a dominant majority, black women and white men were a minority, and black men were almost non-existent.

This over-presence of white women and the utter-absence of black men in our public schools is a consequence of the anti-black racism that's embedded into our educational system. Indeed, in order to perpetuate its existence as an institution, and maintain its integrity, our educational system primarily employs individuals who are willing to achieve its institutional objectives. One of these objectives is the perpetuation of anti-black racism; and it is in relation to this objective that we encounter the first major factor that qualifies or disqualifies an applicant for a teaching position; this factor is their racial background.

As a recruitment practice in our school system, black applicants are endlessly targeted, disqualified, and excluded from employment opportunities. But can this be real? For me, a resolute resolve reminds me that this is real. It is in-fact an already realized reality. But why, then, is this practice operational? To solve this query, we must look beyond the arbitrariness of racial aesthetics; for the exclusion of black applicants is a necessary norm that's rooted in three facts.

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Firstly, the black applicant can never be the symbolic representation and embodiment of our anti-black educational system's objectives, for the black applicant's desire to work within an anti-black institution is itself a form of resistance; resistance against the anti-black racism that posits him/her as the dejected, dreadful, and damned 'other'.

Secondly, the black applicant symbolically represents a positive possibility that actualized its potential over insurmountable instances; burdened with nihilism, negativities, and self-negating norms, and yet indestructible and burning with a will to power.

Thirdly, black applicants have the potential and propensity to nourish, nurture, and strengthen the minds of black children. The few black applicants who somehow manage to secure a position within our public schools are a testament to this fact. These employees revive and replenish the rotting minds of black students by normalizing and encouraging curiosity. Unfortunately, positive encounters between a black school employee and a black student, wherein innocent laughter over common experiences fills the air with joy, subvert the very fabric of our anti-black public schools.

Anti-black school agents know that black school employees disturb, and disrupt, the regulated repression of black students. Thus, the fact that these black employees bring hope to a hostile environment is considered to be a problem in-itself.

Having over-viewed the three facts that necessitate the exclusion of black applicants, we can now confidently assert that insofar as anti-black racism

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pervades our educational system, black educators will continue to be excluded from our public schools.

This fact of exclusion, however, is always submerged in black tokenism. In other words, to appear equitable, our educational system always hires a few black tokens; and when those few tokens exit the institution, they are replaced with other tokens. Thus, this deceptive wickedness, having already stabilized itself, is our educational system's current form of employment equity.

With all of this in mind, we must acknowledge that a feeling of belonging can never be born in a place where exclusion reigns supreme. Also, the exclusion of black applicants from our anti-black public schools alienates black students from their schools; and as aliens, black students never see themselves reflected in the authority figures that they are supposed to respect. How, then, is learning supposed to happen in such a milieu?

The white female teachers, who tyrannically controlled me and my black friends, were neither interested in nor invested in our well-being. The socio-cultural, socio-economic, and racial division between us and them was too extreme to be bridged. Fear governed their actions; fear of reprisal from the other racist school authorities for being too kind to us, and a fear from us, for we (as black students) embodied the culmination of their anxieties.

In anti-black schools with few black teachers and too many white teachers; and in anti-black schools with few male teachers and too many female teachers; black male students were (and still are) alienated aliens. What, then, will it take to insert black male

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teachers into anti-black schools? Who will have to be excluded for this inclusion to occur? What crises could make this dream a reality? Absent black teacher, how will you penetrate through the exclusionary practices of anti-black agents?

## Organs of Structural Violence

*“Rather than glance at the most striking spectacle  
with revulsion or through tear-filled eyes,  
we do better to cast our glance  
at the more mundane displays of power . . .  
where it is difficult to discern domination”  
Saidiya Hartman - scenes of subjection (book)*

*“By disassembling the “benign” scene,  
we confront the everyday practice of domination,  
the non-event, as it were.”  
Saidiya Hartman - scenes of subjection (book)*

By ruminating upon the aforementioned incidents and rationalizations, I’ve recalled the raw nature of the war that was waged against us (the black student populace) in our anti-black schools. By naming institutional practices with signs that capture the consequences of their destructive functions, the major sections that perpetuate the practice of anti-black racism in our public schools became naked; and these sections were, and still are, (a) the curriculum, (b) the streaming practices, (c) the disciplinary practices, (d) the special education procedures, and (e) the hiring practices.

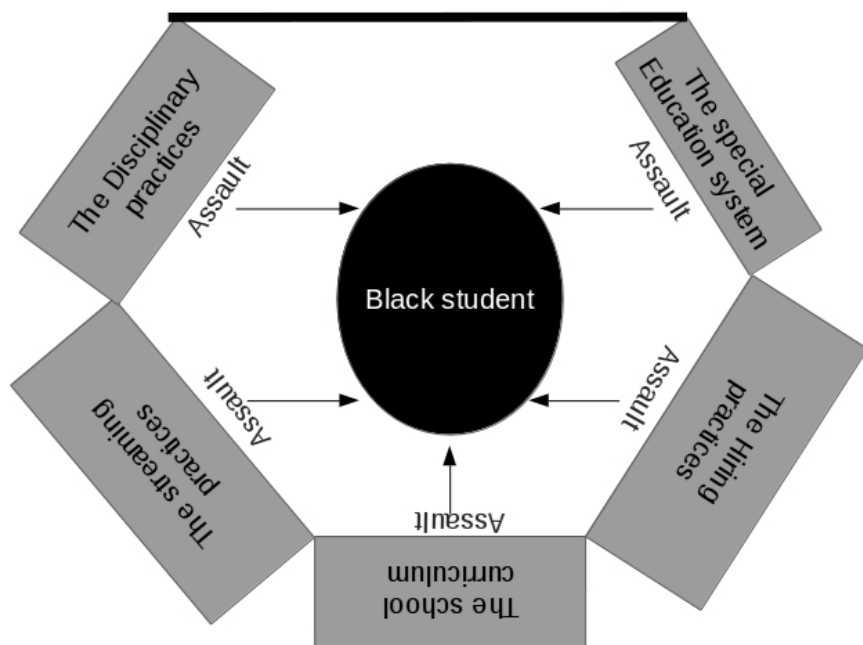
Having named these sections, we must simultaneously perceive the core of both, their individualized functions and their collective telos<sup>6</sup>. For to focus on the parts of the whole, while ignoring the role

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<sup>6</sup>The Greek term Telos signifies the end goal or purpose.

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the parts play in sustaining the whole, is to place the cart ahead of the horses, while knowing that the horses pull the cart.



Also, insofar as each section facilitates the repression of black students, and insofar as these sections are intertwined, then the individualization of the particular sections, as the source of our suffering, is a futile effort.

Inserting the prefix 'white' into curriculum courses can, on its own, take an entire life-time; but what about modern eugenics? Also, while dismantling one section, the transgressions committed in other sections might intensify; how, then, do we solve this dilemma?

The concept of structural violence comes into the equation at this particular moment. It exclaims that a



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structure is undeniably violent, when its organization, and the relations between its parts or elements, begin to negatively influence people, so that their actual (bodily and mental) abilities are below their potential (bodily and mental) abilities. This concept is, undeniably, the compass that could guide us to conduct a fruitful investigation of our educational system.

By examining the parts, the relationship between the parts, and the role of the parts in the whole, this concept grants us the opportunity to (a) contextualize each school component, (b) re-interpret these components as mediums of structural violence, and (c) identify the specific structural acts of violence which are committed within these mediums.

Hence, free from the individualized mediums of structural violence, we can direct our energy towards dismantling our educational systems telos. What, then, is our education system's telos? To be blunt, the telos of our anti-black public schools is to reproduce the practice of anti-black racism by committing structural violence against black students.

To dismantle this telos, we must first name the acts of structural violence that are carried out by our school system. Hence, if we identify the acts of structural violence, then we'll be able to demystify the pragmatic logic of structural violence, and we'll apprehend the effective, efficient, and mechanical way in which black children are coerced to commit suicide. The task of naming these acts is beyond this treatise, so I will not wrestle with it at the moment; but perhaps, a black avenger will assign these crimes suitable signs.

## 5.0: Ruptured Resistances & Perplexing Paradoxes

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*“War is a way of shattering to pieces,  
or pouring into the stratosphere,  
or sinking in the depths of the sea,  
materials which might otherwise be used  
to make the masses too comfortable,  
and hence, in the long run, too intelligent.”*  
George Orwell – 1984 (book)

I hope that I’ve persuaded you to take the practice of structural violence seriously. If I haven’t, then at least I know I tried; and if I have, then I apologize to have been the bearer of this tragic and terrifying message. With that said, we will now continue our examinations. This section of the Treatise will entail two disquisitions; and each disquisition will explore a particular paradox.

Firstly, we will begin with the ‘paradox of rebellion’. In unpacking and then analyzing this paradox, we shall come to grips with: (a) the limits of rebellion in general, and (b) the utility of rebellion in the face of structural violence.

Secondly, we will tackle the ‘paradox of the ‘condemned-creeds’. Here, we will confront the contradictions that are rooted in the ‘condemned-creeds’. Also, the hidden collaborations that condemn blacks to a condition of captivity shall be detailed; and the moment of madness wherein all movements lead to conformity shall be discussed.

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Hence, as we wrestle with the confounding contraptions that ensure black captivity, we shall systematically reveal the ties that bind resistance to subjugation, the 'condemned-creeds' to suicide, self-determination to subservience, and transcendence to immanence.

### Disquisition 1: The Paradox of Rebellion

*"The clash of cultures in the classroom is essentially a class war, a socio-economic and racial warfare being waged on the battleground of our schools, with middle-class aspiring teachers provided with a powerful arsenal of half-truths, prejudices, and rationalizations, arrayed against hopelessly outclassed working-class youngsters. This is an uneven balance, particularly since, like most battles, it comes under the guise of righteousness."*  
*Kenneth clark - dark ghetto (book)*

Let's begin with the question 'What do black students do when they are terrorized by our educational systems mediums of structural violence?' To answer this question, we ought to first realize that black students are a heterogeneous group. Thus, when the gears of structural violence are in motion, and when their minds are being mutilated, black students react in different ways. Some black students resist overtly against their condition, while other students resist covertly; and some students refuse resistance, embrace their condition of captivity, and submit to dictates that demean them.

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Although the students who resist covertly, and those who don't resist at all, suffer tremendously within and beyond their schools, this disquisition is focused on the students who resist overtly. I've chosen to center the students who resist overtly because I myself was an overt resistor. Thence, by exploring this particular category of students, I shall be able to integrate my recollections of the resistance tactics that we (me and my peers) utilized.

Having announced our angle, we must begin by acknowledging, that the mediums of structural violence traumatize black students. This terrorizing condition of being black in an anti-black school cripples the potential of most black students; and as a result, it marks the minds of black children with invisible, permanent, and painful mental scars. These scars, which are merely memories of the confrontations that they had with the malicious mediums of structural violence, tend to simultaneously sharpen and disorient their survival instincts.

Indeed, we, the condemned black students of yesteryear, experienced this simultaneous sharpening and disorientating of our survival instinct. Our survival instinct was sharpened because the thought 'they are racist', forced us to keep our guard up; also, the emergence of this thought mirrored the instant when the necessity of resistance became evident. On the other hand, our survival instinct was disoriented because the modes of resistance that we employed merely reconfirmed our captivity and condemnation.

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As a result of our constant contact with anti-black school agents, we found ourselves possessed by a subconscious realization that our schools were hazardous. Thus, in an unknown moment, the recognition that we were in danger became integrated into our minds as an intuition, and it manifested itself in our actions.

For the most part, we tried to defend ourselves by escaping our situation. Our desire to escape the violent practices of our school was actualized in the moments when we skipped class or came to class late. To our dismay, the fact that we couldn't escape permanently, for we were eventually forced to return to class, frustrated our fugitive aspirations.

When we were forced back into class, we became captives in classes with tyrannical teachers; and as a result, rage and revolt became our rule. Whenever we were told to never question the oppressive tyranny of our schools, whenever we were told that education was not for us, and whenever we were disrespected and dismissed by our teachers, we moved against the system by causing chaos and disrupting the teacher's agenda.

The power of the teacher was in her institutional authority. Students who respected the institution had to respect her. We, on the other hand, were possessed by the 'condemned creeds'; and as a result, we despised formal education. Thus, for us, her authority was meaningless and her words were ridiculous; and therefore, in class, the situation was always adversarial; teacher versus student, perpetrator of structural violence versus the object of structural violence, a powerful white teacher versus powerless black

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students, and institutional-values versus the 'condemned creeds'.

Our teacher's managerial skills had no effect on us, for we chose to be unmanageable; and we often retaliated by (a) engineering intense in-class verbal exchanges that disrupted the teachers program, (b) distracting other students by cracking jokes and fighting, (c) disengaging from formal education and denouncing school qualifications as worthless adornments, and (d) deliberately disobeying and frustrating our teachers. And we did all of this to protect our bruised ego's from the soul-crushing judgments of anti-black school agents.

To be fair, I must admit that our blatant resistance was fun!!!!By confounding our adversaries, we gained confidence and increased our self-esteem. We felt untouchable. A feeling of strength and superiority was born in our bosom, for we openly defied the rules and regulations that everyone obeyed. It fueled our egos, and made us think that we were in control of our destiny.

To our dismay, however, the illusion of 'having control' ended rather quickly, and the joy that we felt in saying 'fuck it' (wherein 'it' was a synonym for 'putting in effort') was short-lived; for we never realized that we were fighting a war that incorporated resistance into its *modus operandi*<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, we thought that we were agents, but we didn't know that we were in a situation where even our agency was bound to subjugate us.

At this juncture, we must tread carefully. Let's move forward slowly and ask: what, then, does it mean for a

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<sup>7</sup>Modus operandi is a Latin phrase; it means mode or method of operation.

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war to incorporate resistance into its *modus operandi*? Why was our agency bound to subjugate us? The answers to these queries are quite simple.

Firstly, If the practice of structural violence was weaponized against us, and if the objective of the mediums of structural violence were to (a) poison our potential, (b) mutilate our minds, and (c) secure our disengagement from our anti-black public schools, then what happened when we decided to skip class, disobey our teachers, and move against the system? What was the result of our rebellion? Well, we certainly didn't receive any rewards for our transgressions. What then did we receive? Well, we received punishments. Indeed, we were suspended, expelled, and managed in school; and while some of us were pushed out of school, others chose to drop out of school.

Overt resistance therefore revealed itself as an ineffective stratagem. By overtly resisting, we were doing exactly what our structurally violent schools wished we would do. Indeed, Insofar as our schools toiled to cripple our futures by destroying our minds, we lessened their burden by (a) 'choosing' to disengage from formal education, (b) 'choosing' to become troublemakers and goofs, and (c) 'choosing' to ignore the rules and regulations that governed our anti-black school. But, what does 'choice' mean in this situation? Isn't agency, at least in this case, inseparable from subjugation and self-destruction?

We can infer from this situation that the objective of structural violence, which is the perpetuation of anti-black racism, was bound to be achieved whether we (as black students) chose to overtly resist or not. If we resisted, then we were bound to be punished; and our

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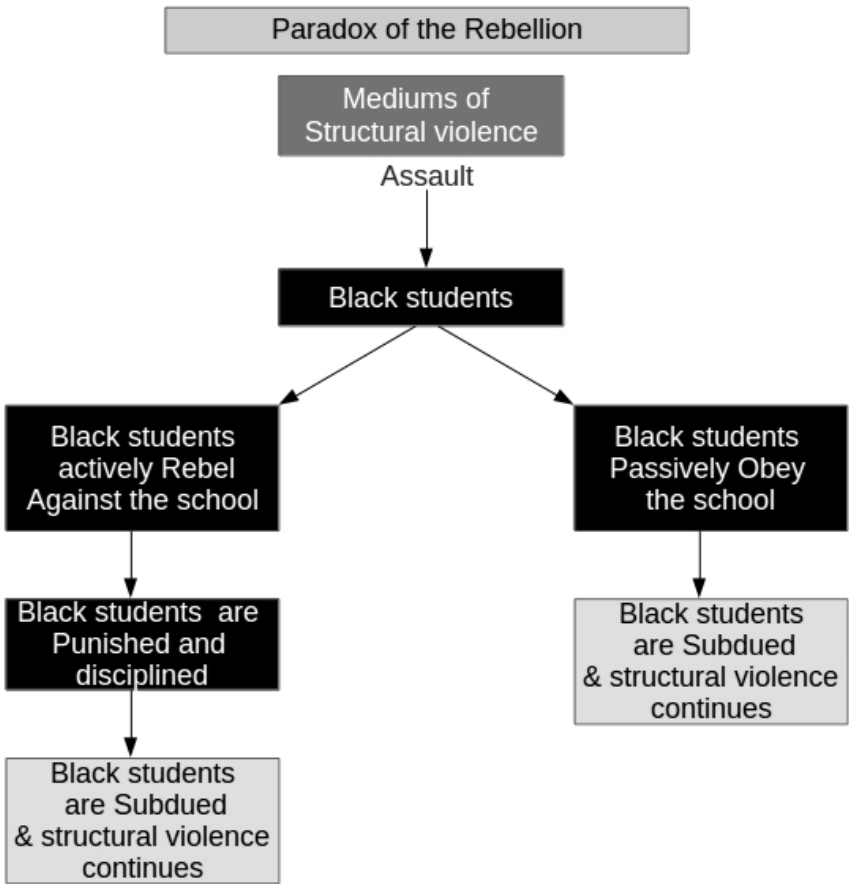
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mental castration was often achieved when we were banished from, or when we were coerced to abandon, our anti-black school. If we didn't resist, then we'd find ourselves terrorized by the mediums of structural violence; and here most minds perished and only a few survived.

Moreover, even those who survived through structural violence suffered tremendously. A stifling solitude alienated black students who obeyed the rules of our schools. The condemned black students, who adhered to the 'condemned-creeds', bullied them because they conformed; and the anti-black world rejected them because they were black; they lived life suspended for they were anomalies. Not belonging anywhere, not fitting in anywhere, they were subjugated and slandered by both anti-black school agents and condemned-black students. These were the students who suffered in silence; and there was always only a very few of these black survivors; conformers who embraced their structurally violent schools.

Thus, it is this condition of constant captivity, wherein activity (overt resistance) becomes synonymous with passivity (subservience), and wherein both overt resistance and subservience eventually lead to subjugation, that we must seize and dissect. More importantly, this confounding situation, wherein mutiny mutates into meaningless motion, is what I've termed 'the paradox of rebellion'.





If the persona of the rebel is the personification of the practice of overt resistance, and if rebellion signifies the instance when resistance against tyranny becomes overt, then the 'paradox of rebellion' cripples our commitment to both the persona of the 'rebel,' and the activity of 'rebellion'. This paradox posits any existing movements against structural violence as futile,

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for all movements appear to be movements towards conformity. This paradox asks, 'why rebel if your rebellion will be used against you to further subjugate you?'

Having encountered this paradox, I see now that our moments of rebellion were inseparable from, and synonymous with, the instances that confirmed our condemnation and ensured our exclusion. In our subversive movements, self-determination presented itself as the antithesis of subservience; and by equating self-determination with rebellion, we expedited our own exclusion.

With these remarks, we must ask ourselves: In the context of structural violence, if choosing rebellion is the same as choosing subjugation, then is there a way to choose rebellion and refuse subjugation? If the only 'choice' available is to become the problem that you are presupposed to be, then is rebellion synonymous with submission and conformity? Are there any other persona's beyond the 'rebel' and the 'conformer' that can be employed by black students?

Can black students act against structural violence without condemning themselves in those actions? If we ever hope to solve the 'paradox of rebellion', then these queries need to be tackled. We must forge a non-destructive method to maintain our integrity in the face of structural violence. Yes . . . we need to now construct a permanent posture that propels us to rebel without ever conceding to the wishes of our coercive anti-black schools.

## Disquisition 2: The paradox of the Condemned-creeds

*“The dominative performance of blackness  
thwarts efforts to reassess agency  
because it has so masterfully simulated black will  
only in order to re-anchor subordination.  
How does one discern ‘enabling conditions’  
when the very constitution of the subject  
renders him [or her] socially dead”  
Saidiya Hartman - scenes of subjection (book)*

In order to sink directly into the depths of this paradox, let’s remind ourselves that we, as the condemned blacks of yesteryear, were (a) always excluded from the wider society and (b) constantly managed as malice via the practice of anti-black racism. The rational objective of anti-black institutions, therefore, was (and still is) to manage, manipulate, and slowly murder us blacks; this is a structural situation that’s beyond good and evil.

As we were terrorized by the practice of anti-black racism, an inviting threat was periodically levied against us. This threat was: belong in the condemned realm or belong nowhere. Facing this threat, and due to the brutality of the war that was waged against us, most of us embraced the ‘condemned-creeds’.

Then, suddenly, something strange happened. Even though anti-black racism coerced us to adhere to the ‘condemned-creeds’, this coercion morphed into ‘individual choice’. As a result, we were coerced again, and this time we were led to believe that we

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'chose' to embrace the 'condemned-creeds' because it facilitates self-determination.

At this juncture, the merging of captivity to choice and self-determination to condemnation is worth nothing. To be clear, there were four steps that lead to these merges. Step 1: We were terrorized via anti-black racism. Step 2: As a result of this terrorism, we were coerced to adhere to the 'condemned-creeds'. Step 3: The first step magically evaporated from the equation, and all we had left was the fact that we've already embraced the 'condemned-creeds'.

Step 4: Through media and music, our lived experiences, and various rationalizations that sanctified the 'condemned-creeds', we were led to presume that the 'condemned-creeds' were (a) the norm, and (b) the only path to self-determination.

As a result of these four steps, we naively presumed that the 'condemned-creeds' embodied self-determination par excellence. This instant, then, was the true moment of madness, because here feeling, familiarity, and fun all fused to ensure our demise.

Indeed, by embracing the 'condemned-creeds' (as self-determination par excellence), we moved against the system; and in this case, the system was the anti-black world. Since criminality was a positive quality in the 'condemned-creeds', we (as condemned blacks) moved against the system by defying the law. Here, all rules and regulations were, for us, meant to be broken; and by breaking them we asserted our agency and exercised our freedom.

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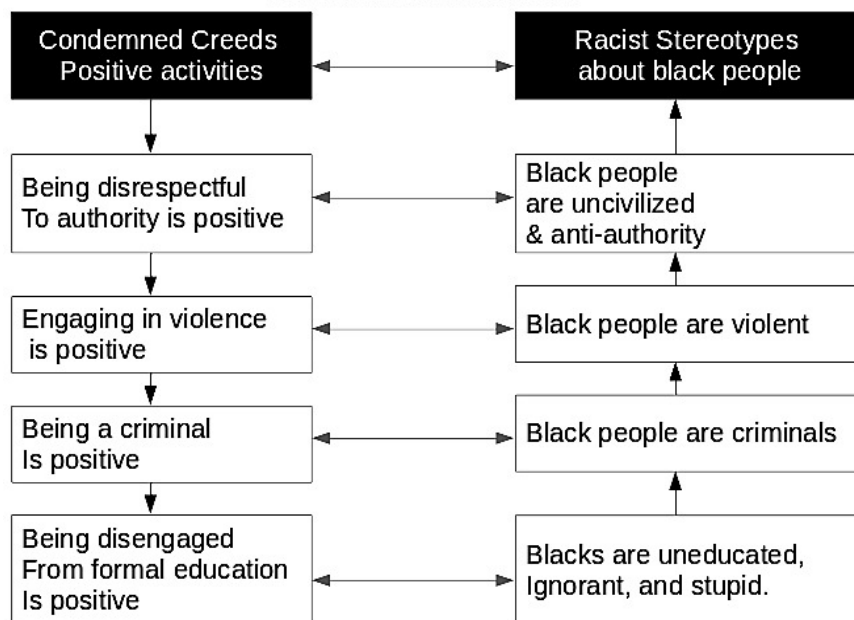
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Unfortunately, we were too naive to realize that those moments of freedom were actually dangerous moments of self-destruction. More importantly, by asserting our agency via criminality, we unsuspectingly chained ourselves to an imminent enslavement.

Yes . . . it seems to me now that we were held hostage in hypnosis; and we were dancing madly to a damned hymn that blurred the line between illusion and reality; for nothing was what it appeared to be.

In retrospect, it is clear to me now that the 'condemned-creeds' and the practice of anti-black racism collaborated to secure our demise. In every instance, the anti-black racist rituals of our city were aligned with, and anchored by, the value-system of the 'condemned-creeds'. When our anti-black city treated us as thugs, the 'condemned-creeds' idealized the archetype of the thug. When our anti-black city condemned us as criminals, the 'condemned-creeds' encouraged, and coerced, us to encounter these condemnations as symbols of our superiority, toughness, virility, and masculinity. Thus, both an internal and external war was (and still is) waged to fuse blackness with criminality.

The Condemned Creeds and  
the Practice of Anti-Black  
racism reinforce each other



This bilateral ambush distorted our perception of criminality; and as a result, we perceived criminality as nobility, and enslavement (i.e., imprisonment) as freedom. As we sought nobility and freedom, we lost what we so desperately sought. Here, those of us who were officially registered as criminals became integrated into the social order as either exiled objects (criminals in jail), or manageable problems (blacks with criminal record who are not in jail). On the other hand, those of us who weren't registered as criminals became integrated into the social order as potential problems (blacks with criminal potential).

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From this posture, one question arises; if both the 'condemned-creeds' and the practice of anti-black racism conspire to ensure black captivity (in prisons), then is the 'condemned-creeds' a mere extension of anti-black racism?

I believe that Seductive and self-destructive seeds have been sowed into our souls; we must now exorcise these seeds and re-encounter reality. If we refuse to fathom the roots of the seeds that secure our subjugation, then we will always encounter the excruciating verity that criminal records are permanent stamps of justified racism after we've been stamped!! Hence, we must realize (here and now) that this collaboration between the 'condemned-creeds' and the practice of anti-black racism fuses blackness and criminality.

Thus, if adherence to the 'condemned-creeds' merely expedited our own enslavement, then by espousing these creeds, it seems that we did exactly what this anti-black society wished we would do. They wanted us to become the lumpen-proletariat<sup>8</sup>, and we 'chose' to forgo our futures!!! They wanted us to be slaves, and we 'chose' to be enslaved as criminals!!!

Thence, it is this condition of captivity, wherein 'choosing' self-determination via the 'condemned-creeds' secures subservience into an anti-black order,

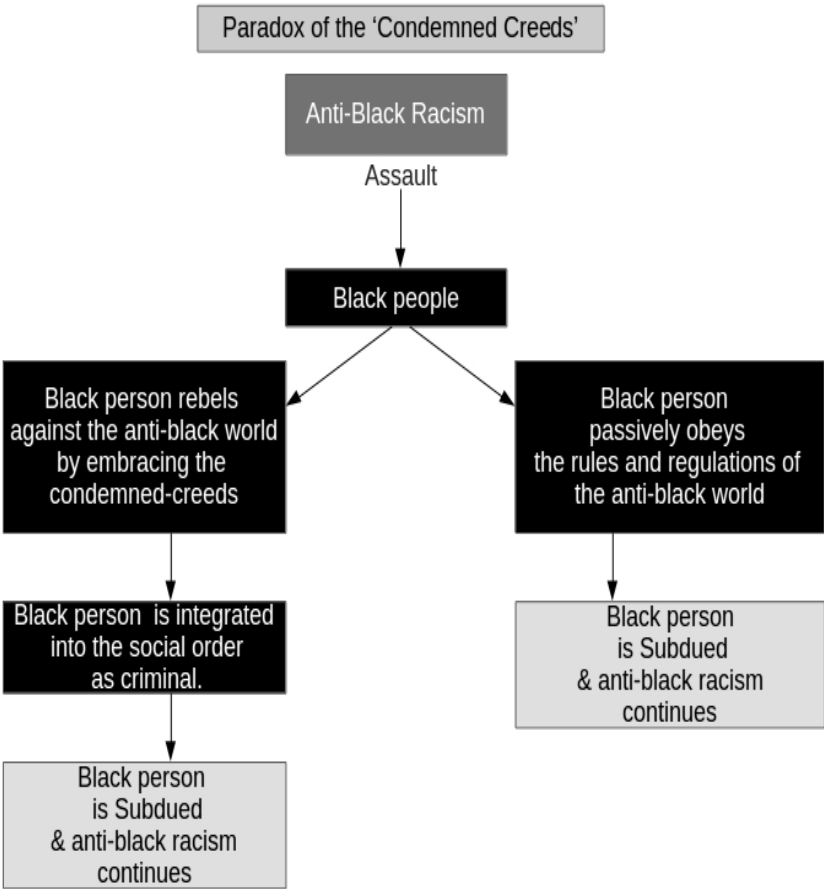
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<sup>8</sup>The lumpenproletariat is a term that was coined by the philosopher Karl Marx. According to Marxist.org, "this term identifies the class of outcast, degenerated and submerged elements that make up a section of the population of industrial centers. It includes beggars, prostitutes, gangsters, racketeers, swindlers, petty criminals, tramps, chronic unemployed or unemployables, persons who have been cast out by industry, and all sorts of declassed, degraded or degenerated elements." In Toronto, the gangbanger, hood nigga, trap queen, and the welfare mother constitute the placeholder stereotypes for the lumpenproletariat.

(Source)

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that we must seize and dissect. Furthermore, this confusing situation, wherein the slave feels free and proud in bondage, is what I've termed the 'paradox of the condemned-creeds'.





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This paradox posits all existing movements against anti-black racism as movements towards subjugation. For instance, if a black person conforms to the dictates of their anti-black world, then they are bound to suffer indefinitely. Their life will entail endless attempts to escape the curse of anti-black racism. To escape, they will mimic the behavior of white people to the grave; and as a result, they will be nothing more than a mimicking object. More importantly, in front of white faces, they will always be subservient, subjugated, and spineless; and this condition of spinelessness will eventually become their permanent disposition.

On the other hand, if a black person rebels against the anti-black world by espousing the 'condemned-creeds', then they are bound to be integrated into, and forced to conform within, an anti-black social order as either (a) an exiled problem, (b) a manageable problem, or (c) a potential problem. Here, the black person becomes the problem that they were presupposed to be; and therefore, even their rebellion engenders subjugation.

Realizing that both routes lead to subjugation, we must ask ourselves, can a black person 'choose' to embrace the 'condemned-creeds', when he/she has already been coerced into it in the first place? And in this context, is 'choosing' the 'condemned-creeds' synonymous with 'conforming' to the desires of an anti-black world?

Moreover, if 'choosing' to embrace the 'condemned-creeds' is fashioned as the desire of an individual who seeks self-determination, then isn't self-determination here synonymous with subservience? In this case, is the desire for self-determination used to

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ensure subjugation? Is non-subservient self-determination possible for blacks who are violated by the practice of anti-black racism? And more importantly, can a black person simultaneously refuse to find solace in this anti-black world, refuse to adhere to the 'condemned-creeds', and refuse to be subjugated by this anti-black world? And if this is possible, then what do these refusals entail?

## II

Having briefly over-viewed the aforementioned paradoxes, we can aver that our situation is much more complex than it seems. Indeed, we cannot just act against (or react towards) the systems of death (structural violence and anti-black racism) that devour us. Rather than act, we must first assess the type of game that's being played. As a populace in war, we cannot engage in offense and defense without understanding the origins, limits, and trajectories of the different moves that are available to us.

Unfortunately, we (the condemned-blacks of yesteryear) didn't think . . . We Just Reacted. Terrorized by structural violence and tethered in an anti-black city, wounded and defenseless, confounded and reactionary, we refused to be subjugated.

Thus, to defend our dignity and protect our pride, most of us adhered to the 'condemned-creeds'; and as a result, we became rebels against the system. Unfortunately, this move backfired; for we were unaware of the aforementioned 'paradox of the 'condemned-creeds' and the 'paradox of rebellion'.

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Indeed, we didn't know that within the matrix of structural violence, both rebellion and subservience secured subjugation; we didn't know that the 'condemned-creeds' reinforced anti-black racism; and we didn't know that these paradoxes mutated mutiny into a meaningless motion. Consequently, we naively (and rather impulsively) misinterpreted slavery for freedom, and subservience for self-determination.

Furthermore, the deadliness of this misinterpretation was highlighted by Paul Willis, in his ground-breaking text 'learning to labor', when he proclaims that "There is a moment, and it only needs to be this for the gates to shut on the future . . . when the . . . ('condemned-creeds') represents both freedom, election and transcendence, and a precise insertion into a system of exploitation and oppression . . . The former promises the future, the latter shows the present. It is the future in the present which hammers freedom into inequality" (Willis, 120).

## 6.0: The Management of Moral agents: Threats and Bribes

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*The first thing is that:*

*“All living creatures are obeying creatures.*

*And this is the second thing:*

*he who cannot obey himself will be commanded.”*

*Nietzsche - Thus spoke zarathustra (book)*

Structures, like people, want to live for as long as possible. To ensure longevity, people focus on improving their health. Structures, on the other hand, focus on improving their internal order. If the internal order of a structure begins to disintegrate, then the structure will no longer be able to achieve it's end goal. Thus, the effective maintenance and constant improvement of the internal-order, is a top priority for most structures.

In regards to the Toronto District school board, the question that we must raise here is: how does this structurally-violent-institution maintain it's internal order? This is an important question to tackle, because it sheds light on the experiences of teachers, guidance counselors, and vice-principals, who have tried to resist and/or disrupt the aforementioned mediums of structural violence, from within the TDSB.

To answer our question, we must first recognize that our educational system classifies it's employees through a hierarchical order. According to this order, each school is governed by a system-administrator who is recognized as the principal. The vice-principals, who

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play the role of the intermediary-agents, govern the low-level agents (ex: teachers, counselors, receptionists, etc). And, of course, the low-level agents govern the students.

Now that we know the rank and file structure of schools, we will move on to tackle our query. In response to it, I assert that our educational system maintains it's internal order by controlling the behaviors and beliefs of all it's employees; and it achieves this goal with bribes and threats. In other words, employees who undermine the mediums of structural violence are swiftly managed, with specific ideological frameworks and a variety of intimidation tactics; and employees who expedite structural violence, are often encouraged with monetary and non-monetary rewards.

### **Ideological frameworks are used to control all employees:**

In regards to the ideological frameworks, one particular framework that is frequently used to control school employees is the 'professional vs unprofessional dichotomy'. Within this framework, "The term professional implies an identity guided by a set of a particular skills, a generic code of ethics, and an adherence to stated rules of behavior" (Bell, 7). Based on this definition, employees who facilitate structural violence are labeled as professional by the system, and employees who fail to follow the stated rules of behavior, are labeled as unprofessional; and therefore, the continuous emphasis on professionalism within the educational system, is merely a method to remind

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employees that they must never obstruct the structural violence.

Moreover, if some employees unexpectedly become sensitive to the mediums of structural violence and their effects, then, for these employees, the “dilemma (generally) becomes whether to assume one’s true moral identity and speak out, or to assume one’s professional identity and remain aligned with certain institutionally and/or professionally expected behaviors and standards” (Bell, 8).

Most employees fear being labeled as unprofessional, for such a label might eventually get them fired. Hence, they usually just do what they’re told to do; and they ignore the structural violence in their schools. In contrast, a few brave employees occasionally try to address the injustices that they witness on a daily basis. These daring agents, who have the intellectual capacity to override the prevalent system-reinforcing ideological frameworks, receive a different type of treatment. Indeed, for them, unfiltered force is used; for they are bullied and threatened into submission.

### **Intimidation tactics are used to control all employees:**

In her masters research paper, titled “Breaking the Silence - How Speaking Truth to Power can change Teaching and Learning”, Cassie bell (a white woman who was high school teacher) interviewed school employees who were threatened, by other employees, for working against the structural violence that pervades our public schools.

In her essay, she provides various “examples given by interviewees that directly related to the silencing of racial issues” (Bell, 33). In one such interview, “Jessica (a school employee) speaks of having received a phone call from a senior administrator warning her and a colleague about specific references to race when discussing student achievement at system level professional development sessions” (Bell, 33). During this phone call, Jessica was told “not to talk about race during PD’s (professional development sessions) because it makes people too uncomfortable” (Bell, 33).

Jessica further elaborated on this incident when she said that “It’s not all people, (but) it’s (just) white people who are frightened of (discussing) race.” (Bell, 33). In reference to her co-workers, Jessica said that her “colleagues of color, whether they are a superintendent or a central coordinating principal . . . (are always willing to address racial issues because) they want to talk about it . . . (but) every time they’ve tried to talk about it (openly in staff meetings or professional development sessions), they’ve been silenced” (Bell, 33).

Unlike Jessica's threat, which occurred over the phone and in private, some threats are actually carried out in school staff meetings. For instance, in one scenario, “a former school principal emphasized (to multiple school employees) that ‘the critiques and suggestions of those who must initiate the programs in the schools and make them work for kids, are not welcomed as valid suggestions and taken seriously’” (Bell, 44). Thus, it is through admonitions such as this one that “staff (quickly) learn . . . that questioning or seeming disagreement are not welcomed as

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characteristics of creative thinking or a desire to contribute, but rather (they are seen as) a voice of opposition or independent arrogance.” (Bell, 44).

Such intimidation tactics, which are frequently carried out privately and publicly, constantly remind school employees that they are powerless. Consequently, a large number of the employees, who (previously) willingly sacrificed professionalism for the sake of doing-the-right-thing, fall into despair; and they end up complying with the mediums of structural violence.

The experiences of these employees, make it clear that our educational system does in fact use a bilateral ambush of ideologies and threats, to successfully discourage it’s employees from undermining structural violence. Sometimes, however, even this bilateral ambush fails; and a few resilient teachers find themselves, against all odds, still willing to risk everything for the sake of their black students.

These teachers are often seen as high-level threats to the system; and one popular method managing such threats is “the unannounced transfer of teachers who had been perceived as defending marginalized (i.e, black) students against behavior, processes and or/decisions (that were made) by fellow teacher colleagues and/or school administration” (Bell, 25).

### **Vice-principals are isolated and seduced into compliance:**

Let’s turn our attention, now, to the vice-principals. To comprehend the unique situation of vice principals, we must first understand that they occupy a very



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crucial position within their schools; for they are the intermediary agents in-between the teachers and the school principal.

To become a vice-principal, a teacher must demonstrate outstanding skills during his/her tenure within the system. Once an individual is selected for this position, the transition of this individual from a teacher to a vice-principal occurs via rites and rituals; these rites are "employed at different stages to socialize the new vice-principals into adopting reactive custodial behaviors that . . . (protect) organizational hegemonies and . . . (maintain) the status quo." (Armstrong, 17).

In other words, vice-principals are, just like teachers, encouraged with threats and bribes to maintain the structural violence. The only difference, here, is that (a) the vice-principals are more isolated than the teachers, (b) their pay-grade is much higher, and (c) they are required to simultaneously witness and ensure the execution of the structural violence.

This new responsibility (of ensuring the execution of the structural violence) is often rejected by new vice-principals, who still care about the black students in their school. This rejection, however, is often short-lived; for the vice-principals tend to eventually "discard their teachers identities and values and adopt perspectives and behaviors that . . . (are) more consistent with managerial paradigms" (Armstrong, 17).

Later on, these vice-principals become addicted to their new status within the system, and they also become desensitized to the structural violence that they're ordered to manage. Indeed, after interviewing various school employees, Cassie bell draws a similar conclusion, regarding the protracted seduction and

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corruption of vice-principals, when she communicates that “any resistance (that) they (i.e, the vice-principals) had (to structural violence) seemed to diminish and teacher ‘values’ receded until the vice-principals became more aligned with the . . . (system’s) processes” (Bell, 17)

In closing, then, we can deduce from our ruminations that the educational system “has created such formidable barriers to progress, that many of the most well-meaning of educators are rendered powerless to institute real and substantial change” (Bell, 3). Hence, “even when educators are willing to take risks personally and professionally and step up to intervene and advocate for marginalized (black) students, there is little if any room for them to do so within educational systems which have been structured to uphold privilege and the status quo, often resulting in organizations which appear closed to transformation from within and impenetrable from the outside” (Bell, 8).

With all of this in mind, we can conclude that structural violence cannot be successfully disrupted by individuals are employed by our educational system. Moreover, if the internal order of our educational system (i.e, the structural violence) is maintained by the senior officials of the system, then there is really no long-term usefulness in reprimanding individual employees, because these individuals can be easily replaced by others (who are willing to commit the violence). Even though the employees are responsible for their actions, we mustn't focus on them too much; for they are merely carrying out the orders that they've received from the higher ranks of the system.

## 7.0: Black exceptions, Gender, & Profitable violence

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*“Swallow your poison,  
for you need it badly”*

*Nietzsche – Beyond Good and Evil (book)*

### **Black exceptions**

The experience of black students in anti-black public schools, is like that of a jailed inmate who’s awaiting a death sentence. Stuck in a time capsule, they are future-less captives of a permanent present; and during this prolonged and painful present, anti-black school employee’s toil to train traumatized black students to forgo their futures. These school agents feel powerful whenever they demoralize black students. Indeed, they play god with the lives of unsuspecting and vulnerable children.

Amidst their evil playtime, they rediscover their limits when unpredictable interruptions sporadically divert some black students, from the purgatory space of non-being that’s reserved for them. These black students, who overcome their anti-black schools and actualize their potential, are glorified as awe-evoking objects that embody the possibility of transcending the curse of being black in an anti-black world; the ‘anti-black world’ part, however, is often forgotten.

These black survivors of white terror have been labeled as ‘exceptions’; black exceptions with divine

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qualities. It seems, however, that these exceptions, who are frequently summoned by our anti-black schools as evidence to reject accusations of anti-black racism, symbolize black potentialities with fugitive futures that could rise with rage and revenge; will they return to the crime scene (the anti-black schools) and remember the criminals (the anti-black school agents) and the crimes (the acts of structural violence)? Or will they forget and bury their pain? This unanswerable query haunts school agents; for they know that a day of reckoning will come.

### **On gendered Structural violence**

The experience of black male students and black female students within anti-black public schools differ along gender lines. This difference is rooted in the gendered expectations and projected futures which are imposed onto each group.

Black girls, for instance, are expected to be passive, obedient, and patient; therefore they are encouraged to persevere through, and endure, the pain of being black in an anti-black school. In addition, the projected future of black girls, as pregnant teens and welfare-receiving single mothers, posits them as being not dangerous and thereby irrelevant. Thus, within our anti-black schools, these expectations shield black girls from the direct cruelty of our school systems brute force; for they are perceived as harmless objects.

Black boys, on the other hand, are expected to be dominant and aggressive; therefore, they are treated as inherently devious and unmanageable misfits who need to be tamed and tortured into subservience. Also,

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the projected criminal potential of black boys, engenders an intensification of the tyranny that they encounter within Toronto's anti-black schools. As a result, they find themselves in a state of constant terror; and this normalized terror is reflected in their withdrawn attitudes and disengaged demeanors.

Thus, the gender-expectations and projected futures that are imposed on black students beget a disparity in distress between black male students and their counterparts. This disparity demonstrates that black boys receive the school systems bone-breaking fist of repression far more frequently than their counterparts; and that there is a higher bounty for their broken bones and traumatized minds.

### **On the constant carnage of black boys**

By realizing that black boys are more thoroughly persecuted (than their counterparts) through the mediums of structural violence, I find myself surrounded by new queries such as, (a) why else does the black boy suffer? And (b) why must he bear more pain in this place of persecution they call schools? To condense my answer to these questions, I've merely highlighted five obvious reasons that explain why black boys are the primary targets of our school systems structural violence; let's consider these reasons briefly.

I. Since gendered expectations posit black girls as not dangerous, black girls who become exceptions are expected to be non-threatening, passive, patient, and non-problematic. Their cognizance of structural violence is expected to trigger civilized conversations

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and end in compromise; and they are seen as manageable because they're already burdened by the demands of femininity.

On the other hand, since gender expectations posit black boys as dominant and aggressive, black boys who become exceptions, and comprehend the criminality of their anti-black schools, are expected to aggressively confront anti-black school agents.

Thus, gender expectations paint black male exceptions as hostile avengers and black female exceptions as indecisive pacifists; and as a result, in order to reduce the emergence of black male exceptions, black boys are crucified far more thoroughly than black girls.

**II.** The prison-industrial-complex (which is composed of the courts, police, and prisons) is a body that benefits from the destruction of black males. Indeed, since black male students, who attend anti-black public schools, are expected to be streamed into prisons via the school-to-prison pipeline; they are also projected into the future as criminals who will be hunted by the police, housed in prisons, and hung (or convicted) in courts of law. The courts, the police, and the prisons, therefore, are three essential institutions that profit from the criminalization of black male students.

The thousands of occupations that are performed within and revolve around these institutions also benefit from the criminalization of black male students. Thence, the criminalization of black boys is a necessity for our society because it creates work; and our school system safeguards this necessity by efficiently destroying the potential of black boys through the mediums of structural violence.

**III.** The non-for-profit industrial complex (which is composed of Ethnicity-based Community organizations, service agencies, and grassroots organizations) also benefits from the destruction of black males in particular, and all blacks in general. These organizations, who feed of government funds, depend on the existence of the criminal practices (such as anti-black racism and structural violence) for their survival. If these practices are dismantled and destroyed, then they would be jobless. Hence, their livelihood requires them to never work towards solving the problems that they pretend to despise.

Also, most black survivors of structural violence have lost their souls in the non-for-profit industrial complex; and their good intentions have blinded them from the fact that they too have become addicted to black blood and flesh. Indeed, just like the courts, police, and prison, the non-for-profits also profit from black pain!!

**IV.** The academic-industrial complex (which is composed of post-secondary institutions) is another body that benefits from the destruction black males in particular and all blacks in general. In most cases, after the practice of structural violence has wreaked havoc upon us, researchers from universities and colleges receive millions of dollars to (a) research our communities, (b) write about their research projects, and (c) publish their research in academic journal and scholarly books.

More exactly, innumerable amounts of PHD's and master's theses' were (and still are) written continuously about Toronto's black community. And more recently, the Somali community in Toronto has become the

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object that all academics desire to investigate and bank on. Entire careers are made by researching those who are bleeding to death!!

**V.** Moreover, beyond economics, the black criminal has a socio-cultural function in our anti-black city's collective consciousness. The black criminal is the mule of this plantation that we call the market place. He is the indispensable, abject, focal causer, and sacrificial lamb of humanity's progress. He signifies the slave-surplus populace of our post-industrial Toronto. He is the evil, criminal, ugly 'other' who we simultaneously fear and dread; and therefore without him to simultaneously fear and pity, we would need new demons and new gods to govern our godless society.

In conclusion, black boys are the primary targets of the mediums of structural violence because, (a) black male exceptions are posited as hostile avengers who will hang anti-black school agents, (b) the criminalization and incarceration of black boys generates jobs, (c) the non-for-profit industrial complex depends on black pain for its survival, (d) the academic-industrial complex benefits from generating titillating researches about the experience of blacks who are tethered in an anti-black city, and (e) the black male criminal plays the role of the devil in our collective consciousness.

Thus, since he (the black boy who is conditioned to become the black criminal) is necessary for our economy, our psychological stability, and our city's cohesiveness, the school-to-prison pipeline as a profitable venture is a central component of our multicultural and color-blind city. The black boy exists,



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and is fattened like a sheep, to be slaughtered in the slaughter house of societal progress.

## 8.0: Ugu dambeyntii {Finally}

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*“My past broke open it’s graves,  
many a pain buried alive awoke;  
they had only been sleeping”  
Friedrick Nietzsche- Thus Spake Zarathustra (book)*

*“All I know is pain, all I seen is death  
Couple homies and brother gone, when I’m gon’ step  
I ain’t suicidal, damn my brain need rest  
Think about my childhood, pain in my chest”  
Styles p- all I know is pain (song)*

At last, we’ve arrived at the terminal point of this Treatise. Here, at this terminus, I confess that I know too little and yet say too much; but I do this to balance-out others who know too much and say nothing!! Those who neither say nor do anything to lessen our pain, augment our suffering with their silence. Thus, whenever we blacks intuit the violence that’s exacted against us, a stifling silence makes us question our own sanity; but it never questions this anti-black world’s insanity.

Whenever we encounter white faces, a suffocating silence turns us into black presenters who excite, black performers who entertain, black participants who accommodate, and black pundits who prioritize white comfort; and as a result, this silence has morphed black interlocutors into spectacles. Realizing that this silence sedates our screams of sadness, I’ve endeavored to sever it by composing this Treatise.

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At this juncture, there is a particular fracturing that I desire to detail before descending into our denouement. This fracture revealed itself to me in the form of a crisis when I was in university. To be exact, I was in my 2nd year of university, when I realized that I was meaninglessly memorizing (studying) for marks. I felt like I was wasting my time and therefore I decided to take a break from school. During this break, I found refuge in the company of books; and at an unknown moment, I began to perceive books as vessels that contain answers. As a result of this perception, I began reading more often; not to study for school but to search for answers!!Thence, in an effort to satisfy my curiosity I read profusely; and I stumbled upon titillating truths, forgotten facts, incognito insights, and novel notions.

I mention all of this only because I see here a vital fracturing. I am referring to the fracturing that occurs when we sever 'education' from 'school'!! This fundamental fracturing ignited my intellectual curiosity. In an age when schooling is an exercise in structural violence, self-education beyond the borders of school is the only form of genuine education. The Internet has made self-education easy; all we need is patience, effort, and perseverance.

Moreover, we (as black beings) ought to read, investigate, prepare, train, and weaponize our minds with knowledge; for self-education is bound to give us the armoury and weaponry that we need to defend ourselves against the practices of anti-black racism and structural violence. Furthermore, the aforementioned fracturing that freed the concept 'education' from the domain 'school', refined my

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attitude, agenda, and ambition; and one direct result of this refinement, is the composition of this Treatise. Thence, this endeavor to sever the silence that sequesters our shrieks of agony is also an attempt to persuade you to sever 'education' from 'school'; for the adventure of embarking onto the unknown realms of knowledge is full of rewards.



The spirit of this Treatise can be summarised with the Somali proverb: "Dab aan kullaylkiisa la arag, dambaskiisa lagama leexdo". The translation of this proverb is "If a fire's hot flame is unseen, then no one will avoid its ashes." The potency of this proverb is concealed in its many metaphorical messages. One of these messages is: 'undetectable dangers don't compel us to dread their detrimental after-effects'. For us, in the context of this Treatise, the 'undetectable dangers' are the practices of anti-black racism and structural violence, and the 'detrimental after-effect' is the burnt body of Toronto's black populace.

As the targets of these undetectable dangers, we (Black Torontonians) are ablaze in an unseen fire that incinerates us; and this burning symbolizes the mutilation of our minds, the erosion of our potential, and the destruction of our futures. As we burn, we can neither see the fiery flames (which are the mediums of structural violence) nor can we feel the fire (because structural violence is spread-out, stable, and systematic); and as a result, we've been unable to prevent the catastrophes that consume us.

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Our consciousness only captures the fact that our ambitions have been reduced to ashes, and therefore we constantly find ourselves confronting the after-effects of the chaos that's caused by the fire that devours our dreams. Some of these after-effects include the gang wars (direct violence) that set our communities ablaze, the socio-economic exclusion that alienates us, and the hopelessness that drives our communities into despair.

Since we've been reduced to (a) burning bodies, (b) bodies that are destined to be burned and (c) burnt bodies; this treatise was an attempt to reveal 'Dab kullaylkiisa Aan la arki Karin' (a hot flaming fire that can never be seen). In other words, to avoid becoming the ashes of an unseen fire, I've tried here to make visible the undetectable flames (the structural violence) that engulf us.

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So . . . here . . . I invite you  
to enter into the zone  
of the after-effect;

At this moment, when I look around, I realize that a war has been (and still is) waged against our black bodies. My generation, and generations before me, have perished into the purgatory space of non-being that's reserved for us. Prisons, unrealized potential, wounded bodies, mutilated minds, and buried dreams have been our lot.

Destruction, however, hasn't devoured all of us. The black populace drowns in ashes, but among its ruins

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live bands of black fugitives; blacks who escaped from the tethers of structural violence. Moreover, insofar as the practices of structural violence and anti-black racism were (and still are) calibrated to render us future-less; and insofar as these practices are positioned to perform their rituals in perpetuity; then those of us who've escaped (and continue to escape) from the claws of these cannibalistic practices, must never forget that they are (beyond everything else) fugitives; outlaws on the run.

As a result of their fugitive movements, these blacks move past the present and slitter into the future with stolen-futures. Their future is stolen because, if they didn't flee from the invisible flames of structural violence that sought to reduce them to ashes, then they wouldn't have had futures. Indeed, future-less and fixed, they would've existed in a permanent, irrational, and unbearable present.

Hence, acknowledging that successful slippages from structural violence lead to the formation of fresh spaces, wherein black fugitives enter into the future with their stolen-futures, I declare that I'm (also) a black fugitive with a stolen-future!!! Do you see me now? I . . . wasn't supposed to have a future . . . but I have one. Hence, my stolen-future exists in tandem with the fixed-futures of other blacks. As a fugitive, my existence is bound to those who didn't want to flee and those who weren't able to flee; and the benefits of my fugitive movements are always contextualized by their condition of captivity.

I write to you, then, from this stolen-future, and as a fugitive, to remind you that this moment was never supposed to happen. But now I'm here; and I sense

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that there are others like me; other black fugitives who stole their future. So I ask you black fugitive, if our futures are indeed stolen, then can we ever live for ourselves? If we are fugitives, then isn't the force that frightened us into fugitivity inscribed into our identity? Will we return to incapacitate the systems that secure our subjugation? Will we fracture the rituals that forced us to flee? Or shall we play, and pretend, to be free?



To be earnest, this future that I stole - this future that was denied to my friends from the Xaafadd - is both a blessing and a burden. It is a burden because I am constantly crippled by the memory of the lives that we lived as lifelessness; the lives of condemned-blacks who were rejected by an anti-black world. Still, this stolen-future is a blessing, for I now move to mutate black captives with fixed-futures into black fugitives with stolen-futures. I now desire to destroy the anti-blackness that consumed us entirely.

My desires have even found refuge in my dreams; and lately I've been dreaming of my old Xaafadd. Often in my dreams, I find myself walking back and forth on a basketball court. Far too frequently, I feel an unbearable anxiety consume me entirely; confused, alone, and scared, I just keep on pacing back and forth. Then, someone calls my name. Sometimes I look up to see who it is, but most times I ignore the voices that call out to me. When I don't look up, I just continue pacing until I wake up from the dream.

Whenever I look up, however,  
I see all my childhood friends  
and I also see myself among them  
but Instead of our faces  
I see aborted lives, un-actualized potentialities,  
pained existences, burned dreams,  
defiled bodies and scarred minds.

I look elsewhere to escape, and I find myself paralyzed by the sight of a mountain of burning bodies; these are the bodies of murdered black children; children who were consumed by the fire of structural violence. Here, the terror intensifies; for when I stare at the burning bodies for too long, I begin to see myself and my friends being burned alive. Unable to stop looking, I watch our flesh falling off . . . bit by bit.

I share this dream only to emphasize that both my subconscious and conscious mind's, are consistently collaborating to remind me that I'm a fugitive with a stolen-future. The constancy of these reminders is almost unbearable; for a part of me wants to be carefree!!Yes. . . A part of me doesn't want to be burdened by these heavy thoughts all the time!! So sometimes I say to myself: 'I need to think about 'my' future'. In other moments, my friends and family tell me to get serious about my career.

During these speculative seconds, I am drowned by question such as, am I wrong for thinking about black captives with fixed-futures? Am I being immature when I dwell upon pained memories? Should I move on and act like I am not a fugitive? Perplexed and pensive, I



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look into the mirror and I say to myself that I should be grateful. Yes . . . I Should thank god!! I tell myself that I ought to be glad that I wasn't captured in the fire that burned those who were closest to me. I tell myself that I should live my life and stop thinking too much.

Suddenly, reality disrupts my fantasy; I hear about old friends who lost their minds because of their condition of captivity, I console relatives who are unable to get jobs because of their criminal records, I see black neighborhoods getting raided by the police, I hear anti-black remarks being uttered out loud, I watch futuristic movies with no black people. What can I do? I cannot tune out; for I am hypersensitive to our suffering. Plus, the anti-black world never lets me forget that we (blacks) are endlessly under attack.

Thus, unable to evade the present or forget the past, I begin to see myself among the black boys who suffer alone in prison; and then I see my little sister among the black girls who find themselves in nightmares full of despair, death, and depression. Then, I see my mother among the mothers who misplaced their sanity in this insane world; and I imagine my father sitting with those fathers who love escaping into irretrievable pasts to evade their pained existences.

These thoughts make it clear to me that I cannot neutralize the pain of memory. So, as I think of them, those whose destiny was sealed and sequestered in the condemned realm, I also revive and reincarnate their memory. I think of their dreams, hopes, and desires; and as a result, I see them everywhere; they're eyes are on my neck as I move with this burden.

In their shrieks of agony,  
condemned black boys and girls remind me  
that they too were once children.  
They tell me to tell the world  
that they did not deserve the slow death  
that was designed for them.

They are in me and I carry them with me wherever I  
go. Still, we are divorced, for they were captured,  
burned, and broken when I escaped. Thus, their  
unmarked existences are marked in my mind; and their  
untold agonies speak to me at night.

I wonder . . . for how long  
will their pain propel me?  
Where will this desire to never forget send me?  
Will it eat me alive or will it force me to live?  
I wonder . . . what does it mean to love  
in a world that's so cruel?



It must be evident by this point that this treatise is  
not meant to bring comfort and contentment. Rather,  
this treatise is meant to elaborate on a posture that's  
been excluded; a posture of pain that ponders upon a  
future wherein more pain is promised.

Still, this posture is not a posture of hopelessness; I  
write because I have hope!! I dwell upon the pained  
existences of blacks, and the terrors of anti-black  
racism and structural violence, because I know that our  
persecution is not permanent!!

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Most importantly, I write to ask you to walk down this path with me. If you experienced what I experienced; and/or if you think that no black child should suffer in seclusion via the mediums of structural violence; then live to dismantle these mediums. Dig deep into your own experiences, venture into your own tribulations, and leave your mark upon this anti-black world; this world that tried to erase you out of existence.

With that said, it is my estimation that our only path to peace is through pain. Indeed, if we continuously commemorate the deaths, and detect the dangers, that are caused by the practice of anti-black racism, then a painful dreadfulness is bound to drown us. And instead of evading this pain, if we garner the courage to ground ourselves in it, then I'm certain that we shall nurture both a burning passion for justice and a horrifying hatred of injustice; and this, here, is the raw matter out of which permanent commitments are born.

My hope, then, is to get us grounded in pain. Yes, let us share each other's pain and drown in despair; and then let us be reborn together with a passion for justice and a hatred for injustice. Yes, let's mark the structural murdering, mechanical mutilating, and incessant banishing of our black brothers and sisters, let's dwell upon the violent purges that breathe life into our multicultural city, and let's confront the crippling fact that our pain is endless.

Grounded in (and gripped by) pain, I, the black criminalized child of yesteryear, exist to remind the future of ghosts who live in a buried pasts. These black ghosts beg us to see our situation for what it actually is. This incessant structural purging of black beings is murder; an unending mechanical murdering of the

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black populace. But this purge is not especially designed for us here in the North. Rather, what we face here in the city of Toronto is merely a particular instantiation of a global phenomenon; for the practice of anti-black racism ensures the perpetual purging of black people on a global scale. So, if we ground ourselves in pain, then can we act locally to cripple a global crime?



For now, our situation is dire, deadly, and the future looks unpromising. Indeed, perishing in silence and pain from a permanent persecution, a white light continues to usher us into Hades; the place where our black bodies are buried alive. So, when will the black ghosts of yesteryear possess the black bodies of the present to protect the future? Who will break the tethers that bind us? These queries that burn me ought to burn you too!!

Now, in parting, I leave you with two communiqués from Steve Biko. In this first communiqué, which is a timeless warning, Biko proclaims to us (blacks) that: “We must realise that our situation is not a mistake on the part of whites but a deliberate act, and that no amount of moral lecturing will persuade the white man to “correct” the situation. The system concedes nothing without demand, for it formulates its very method of operation on the basis that the ignorant will learn to know, the child will grow into an adult and therefore demands will begin to be made. It gears itself to resist demands in whatever way it sees fit. When you refuse to make these demands and choose to come to a round table to beg for your deliverance, you are asking

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for the contempt of those who have power over you.”(91, Biko)

From this warning, we descend into the second and final communiqué, which is an articulation of what it means to be black; for to make demands as a black being, you must first know the true meaning of the signal black. Here Biko proclaims to us that: “black is a reflection of a mental attitude (and) merely by describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to use your blackness as a stamp that marks you out as a subservient being” (48, Biko). Come then, choose to be black and don’t resist the truth. Come with me and let’s dig deep beneath the earth and let’s live to destabilize that structural violence that secures our subjugation.

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